THE AFRICAN CHURCHES OF YORUBALAND

1888 - 1922

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ABSTRACT

The thesis is divided into four parts of equal size plus a concluding epilogue. Part I discusses the events in the Niger Mission prior to 1894. Prominence is given to these events because for West African Christians they signified a dramatic break with the policy pursued in the earlier nineteenth century. The settlement of 1894 in the Anglican mission laid down general mission policy for the following sixty years. Africans who refused to accept the new policy were the founding fathers of the African Church movement.

Part II presents the general causes of discontent in the Yoruba mission -- the comity agreements, policy towards polygamy and autocratic structures of mission government. It also records the events and specific causes of schisms which created the major African churches.

Part III is devoted to an observation of where and by what means the African churches expanded from Lagos where they originated. They opposed the "society method" of the missions relying upon what they termed "apostolic modes of expansion".

Part IV opens with an analysis of the major factors in African church government. It outlines the prerogatives

and limits of their power as prescribed by public opinion. Then follow illustrations drawn from two major denominations. Part IV further attempts to show how the trend to decentralization of authority was met and arrested by expanded organization within the church and by inter-denominational co-operation and organic unions.

A brief epilogue points out that inter-denominational union is today the pressing problem of the African churches especially in relation to church union schemes now being formualted by the missions. The epilogue suggests alternatives for the African churches should the missions exclude them from church union negotiations.

PREFACE

Churches, other than those of the missions, have received little attention in West Africa. What interest there has been, is usually devoted to the "Aladura" whose exotic ritual attracts the European. Parrinder's Religion in an African City (1953) which devotes six pages to the African churches, and Coleman's Background to Nationalism (1958) that draws on Parrinder, are the only published comments. This is all the more peculiar when (as my bibliography shows) the African churches have published a remarkable amount of material about themselves. It is unlikely that any other movement prior to 1940 will produce such a quantity of literature of African origin. It is symtomatic of European attitudes that the University of Ibadan classifies many African Church publications under anthropology rather than religion. On the other hand, the African Church has never sought to publicize itself among Europeans. Its reports, pamphlets and periodicals have been directed towards the African community. This does not mean that African churchmen have sometimes not been irritated by their neglect. One once said to me, "It is better to be cursed than ignored." Possibly for this reason my research was welcomed by all the African churches.

My interest was first aroused in 1956. I was then on an exchange scholarship at the University College of Ibadan working on certain aspects of nationalism in Western Nigeria.

I read African Church publications in the university library gaining from them an insight into Yoruba life which other writers failed to convey. I made personal contact with their churches in Ibadan finding their worship congenial and conducted in a mode to which I was accustomed. This study, in a sense, derives from the comment of a clergyman who hinted that since I was interested in history I might be persuaded to look into their past.

When I began the present research I was aware of some of the published material, but was unprepared for the vast amount of primary sources which came to hand. Every organization produced minute books, correspondence, reports, biographies of their clergy, and old constitutions. Details of these collections appear in the bibliography. One or two deserve special mention. The U.N.A. has in its possession a full set of minutes from 1891 to the present day, well preserved in leather bound volumes. On the other hand, the African Church Organization central office records go back only as far as 1922. This deficiency was remedied by the private collection of Adekunle Coker, stored on the top floor of his plantation residence at Ifako, outside Lagos. It represents the personal, business and church-official papers of his father, J.K. Coker, without doubt the outstanding spirit of the African Church Movement before 1922. The earliest letter of the Coker Papers is dated 1852

but the bulk of material originates from between 1900 and 1935.

The Coker papers and a smaller collection, the official papers of G.A. Oke (Supt. of the U.N.A. 1934-1961), are now both lodged in the National Archives at Ibadan. Both are open to research scholars upon request. Unfortunately the cataloging was done after this research was completed. My footnote reference will be of little assistance except to indicate the collection.

The best collection of source material for the independent Baptist Church is in the hands of the American missionary, C,F. Roberson, now stationed at Lagos. The Roberson archive is steadily expanding as its promotor is an ardent collector who shows an acute sense of the breadth of the "stuff" of African history. An outstanding holding is his series of local church histories, written by older members of the individual Baptist churches scattered throughout Yorubaland. Other organizations including the missions might very well copy this commendable idea.

Before turning from African source material I should like to mention one further fact. Unlike missionary records, African Church source material is uncensored. Even disciplinary cases involving the clergy, are open to the perusal of the scholar. This is a great privilege and aid to honest scholarship, although it imposes a responsibility upon the

researcher. Furthermore, the African churches do not demand, as certain mission societies do, a written pledge to submit intended publications for their perusal. It would, nevertheless, be advisable in the interests of courtesy and the continued "open handedness" of these churches, to submit intended publications which use their source material to the various heads, clerical or lay for their comments.

A word ought to be said in regard to typology. Efforts are being made at the present time to standardize the nomenclature applied to churches not of missionary origin in Africa. Under this typology the African churches of Western Nigeria are classified as "Ethiopian". I have no quarrel with these efforts, but at the same time, I believe that my nomenclature should be, as far as possible, that used by African churchmen themselves. Ethiopiansim has no meaning to them. If it does, it refers to a denomination, the Ethiopian Communion which holds views and tenets which place it outside the African Church Movement. If this work is to have meaning to the groups whose history it explores, it is best written in the nomenclature which has meaning for them.

It appears to me that the African churches of Nigeria are outstanding examples of their kind in Africa. True, little research has been done, but surely enough (especially in South and East Africa) to show that the Nigerian churches

in the size of their organization, their articulateness and the impact they have had upon their countrymen stand out as leaders in their class.

Three major works on African churches in other parts of the continent precede this thesis -- Sundkler's Bantu Prophets; Welbourn's East African Rebels;Shepperson's Independent African. A word of explanation will clarify the relation of their subject matter to the African churches among the Yoruba.

While Sundkler's main concern is prophetism, he does sketch a short historical account of the rise of the Ethiopian (African) churches in South Africa. This is barely sufficient to indicate the major similarities and differences between the African churches of Zululand and Yorubaland. They were established during the same era (1890-1920), the Rand and Lagos fulfilling similar roles as their birthplace and nursery. In contrast, the Yoruba churches appear more articulate which may have assisted them in solving the problem of schism which continues to afflict the Zulu churches.

East African Rebels deals with independent churches in Uganda and Kenya. Superficially they appear to be 'African' but Yoruba churchmen would not regard them as such, since one was European led, one was clearly unorthodox and a third sought foreign affiliation. Except for its affiliations the African Orthodox Church of Uganda appears in all major essentials to be an African church.

Both Bantu Prophets and East African Rebels are

sociological studies which are difficult to compare with an historical analysis. Independent African is an historical study of an abortive attempt to establish an African church in Nyasaland. The tragic end of the church before its maturity made it unsuitable for comparative purposes. But Independent African breathed a spirit of sympathy which I have tried to imitate.

Most modern writers admit their bias or at least their purpose. Frequently research is directed towards understanding the "peculiar phenomenon" of the African church treating it as a deviation from the "normal"-- the mission society. Its aim is to assist the missions to adapt to their African environment. This has never been my purpose.

I have sought to operate from the premise that the missions are the "peculiar phenomena" in Africa, and the African church the "normal". This, I believe, is closer to the early and mid-nineteenth century philosophy of missions upon which African churches were built. My approach was possible because my source material was mainly from the pens and printing presses of African churchmen who convinced me of the logic of their arguments. A quick comparison of the source material of this thesis with Bantu Prophets and East African Rebels will indicate the difference. Had I been forced to depend upon the mission archives and colonial government sources I could not have equalled the impartiality of the writers whose research I am now presuming to criticize.

Many of the things which African churchmen said and did have a curiously modern ring today. What they said before 1900, mission critics like Roland Allen in The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church, were saying thirty years later. What they did before 1920 the mission societies have yet to do. Some of the mission churches while officially maintaining their historic attitude to polygamy are quite openly following a policy which except for its hypocrisy, is the African Church policy.

In the light of the above, it seems redundant to say that I believe this work is original -- and not only in the basic facts of the story I have presented. I have, I believe, been original in my efforts to show the influence of economic and social activities on religious attitudes. I hope that the result is not to expose churchmen to the criticism that their religious behaviour is based upon secondary and mercenary ends. This is far from my intention. I have tried to weave into prominence the ideological views for which they often sacrificed their economic and social status. African Church membership was never the path to the top among the Yoruba people. For the first generation at least, if took outward courage coupled with inner conviction and spirituality -- attributes of the truly sincere Christian.

PART - 1.

The Settlement of 1894.

> ... there are times when it is more helpful that a people should be called upon to take up their responsibilities, struggle with and conquer their difficulty than that they should be in the position of vessels taken in tow, and that for West African Christianity, this is the time. (James Johnson, July 19, 1892.)

A discussion of Christianity in West Africa must begin with Sierra Leone. Not only was the colony of Sierra Leone the first field of modern missionary enterprise on the West Coast, but it also provided numerous black missionaries who fostered the growth of the church in all the coastal cities. Furthermore, because it was the first to receive the gospel, Sierra Leone led West Africa in church organization, and in submerging the European-controlled mission, and creating an African-controlled church.

The colony of Sierra Leone was founded by a philanthropic company, as a home for repatriated slaves. In 1789 the first freed slaves arrived from England. In 1792 over one thousand black loyalists arrived from Nova Scotia, and in 1800, further new world repatriates, the Maroons, came from Jamaica. By 1808 the colony had proved too great a financial undertaking for the Sierra Leone Company, and became a Crown Colony. After the Act of Abolition in 1807 the British Government attempted to put an end to the slave trade. The British West African Squadron patrolled the West Coast,

intercepting slave ships and forcing them into Freetown where the slaves became freemen.

The Church Missionary Society (C.M.S.) was founded in 1799 by men who had been active in the Sierra Leone Company.[1] It was not surprising that Sierra Leone would be one of the first areas of interest. Missionaries were sent out in 1804. The mission proved both a challenge and opportunity for the C.M.S.. The challenge lay in the climatic unsuitability of the Coast for Europeans, and in the lack of modern precedent in missionary methods. The opportunity was the ability to reach a significant number of Africans who were uprooted from their tribal surroundings, who represented a wide variety of tribes, and who, because of their gratitude for their rescue, were predisposed towards Europeans.

The missionaries organized the Colony into parishes, and provided education culminating in a training college for boys (Fourah Bay College) and for girls (Annie Walsh Training Institution). Because of the heavy mortality of Europeans, an African Ministry was trained very early, and carried the greatest burden of the work of the church. In 1852, late in the mission history,[2] the Diocese of Sierra

1. E.G. Ingham (Bishop of Sierra Leone (1883-1896) Sierra Leone After a Hundred Years. London, 1894. p. 193.
2. "Had the Church of England been as much alive to her ecclesiatical responsibilities, as her handmaid (the C.M.S.) had been in her own evangelistic department, Sierra Leone would not have had to wait so long, to her loss, for this necessary development." Ingham, Sierra Leone After a Hundred Years, p. 198.

Leone was established with a European bishop at its head. This enabled African clergy to be ordained without taking the long voyage to England. In 1873, an independent pastorate was organized. This meant that the African clergy and laity could now control the local administration of the church through their parish committees, and Church Council. The bishop who took an oath of allegiance to the Archbishop of Canterbury, was the supreme authority in the Colony in matters of doctrine. The clergy held their licences from the bishop, and were responsible to him.

Before the slave trade was completely abolished, many ex-slaves of Freetown, in the 1840's, began for various reasons, to migrate to cities all along the coast from the Gambia to Calabar in what is now Eastern Nigeria. Some returned to their tribes, others searched for their relatives, and some settled in other cities for the trading opportunities available. By 1860 there existed small communities of Christian ex-slaves or Sierra Leonians as they were called, in all the cities along the coast and as far as three hundred miles inland. The missionaries in Sierra Leone were called to begin Christian work in these towns.

The largest migration flowed back to Lagos and its hinterland, the Yoruba country, and especially to Abeokuta, capital of the Yoruba Egba Kingdom. Both Anglican and Methodist missionaries responded to the call of the Christian Egbas, and began missionary activities in Abeokuta in 1846.

In 1851 the British Government forced the closing of the slave markets in Lagos, and placed a consul there to prevent illicit smuggling of slaves. The missionaries came to Lagos immediately. For geographic, commercial and political reasons, Lagos attracted a large number of the returning exiles.[3] The Christian church developed rapidly. The history of Sierra Leone was repeated. The city was divided into parishes, each with its own church-- St. Pauls Breadfruit, St. Johns (Aroloya), Holy Trinity (Ebute Ero), St. Peters (Faji) and St. Judes (Ebute Metta). Christ Church, where Europeans and the most Europeanized Africans worshipped was without a parish. Educational institutions similar to those of Freetown were developed early in Lagos. Again like Freetown, Lagos was organized as soon as the churches were self-supporting, into a Native Pastorate. This organization began in 1876, and was completed in 1887 after a decade of European missionary opposition.

As in Sierra Leone, so in Lagos, when the independent pastorates were established, Europeans were no longer in ministerial positions except in Christ Church which remained outside the pastorate. A few remained employed in educational work. The European missionaries concentrated upon the interior cities of Abeokuta, Ibadan, and Oyo. It was

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3. The return of the Sierra Leone exiles to Yoruba is fully discussed in Jean F. Herskovits, Liberated Africans and the History of Lagos Colony to 1886, D.Phil. thesis, Oxford, 1960.

noteworthy that in Lagos and Freetown the organization stopped short of an African bishop; both being under the English bishop of Sierra Leone.

Further east, along the coast, in the Delta and drainage basin of the Niger, merchants began a profitable trade in palm oil. Since the Africans efficiently organized the collection of palm oil in the interior and supervised its transport to the coast, European merchants came only as far as the Delta to trade. Henry Venn, secretary, and leading spirit in the C.M.S. decided that in this area a new missionary approach should be undertaken. The problems of the method employed in Freetown and Lagos arising out of English racism, might be avoided if a mission was wholly managed by Africans.

In the methods exercised in Lagos and Freetown a European missionary settled in a large city and gathered a small Christian congregation. The Christians were taught to read their bible. A few who emerged with greater spirituality and a more intelligent grasp of the scriptures, would be appointed as catechists to live in other wards of the city or in surrounding villages to preach the gospel and teach reading. As the number of catechists grew, those who qualified for the ministry were given further training or sent to a training institution such as Fourah Bay. If the Bishop was satisfied with these men, they were then ordained and worked directly under the European missionary. When there were sufficient ordained African clergy, congregations

large enough to support them, and a school system commonly culminating in a secondary institution, a Native pastorate governing a number of churches would be set up. At this point, the European missionary should withdraw and settle on the missionary frontier to begin the process all over again. Logically, if proclaimed policy had been carried out when the pastorate, or two pastorates were running smoothly, and clerical leadership given an opportunity to develop, an African bishop should have been appointed. At this stage the mission would disappear and the church fully emerge. As noted above, this last step was not taken in Sierra Leone or Lagos.

Between 1841 and 1872, Henry Venn, general secretary of the C.M.S., virtually single-handed formulated the Society's policy. He believed in a policy of planting self-supporting, self-governing and self-propagating churches overseas. The method so far employed in Freetown and Lagos had not achieved these aims. The greatest difficulty was in the timing of the step by step change from mission to church. The Africans often felt the pace was depressingly slow; the Europeans often thought it alarmingly fast. Europeans, who had over a life time built a church congregation, desired to remain as pastors to the flock they had gathered, and begrudged in older life, moving to the frontier.[4] Shortage of funds

4. This attitude of European missionaries was discussed by E.C. Stuart in a "Paper at Bath Church Congress", 1873, quoted in Stock, History of the Church Missionary Society, London, 1899, vol ii, p. 418.

often aided this feeling as the mission society was unable to provide expensive European accommodation in new areas. Sometimes Europeans were left for years in old established churches, supervising larger and larger areas worked by Africans. African ministers, although they had freedom of action, due to the inability of Europeans to supervise so large an area, did not receive the authority and power which they felt was commensurate with their work. This, coupled with the reluctance of the Society to go the last step and consecrate African bishops, caused friction between mission and church, and had a depressing influence on the Christian work. A situation arose which a mission critic half a century later accurately described.

> Those who are seeking to gain authority never agree to wait until those who hold it think that they are sufficiently prepared. The moment arrives only when those who are seeking to gain authority are strong enough to drive those who hold it into concessions, by threats of revolt. The inevitable result of this method is discontent and strife.[5]

Henry Venn was aware of these problems and attempted to secure support for the consecration of Samuel A. Crowther as bishop of Yoruba. He met opposition from those missionaries anxious for this position for themselves. When these older missionaries were finally convinced of Venn's views, a younger group of missionaries refused to work under Crowther.[6]

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5. Roland Allen, The Spontaneous Expansion of the Church, London, 1949, p. 33.
6. Townsend, Hinderer, Gollmer and Smith, (pioneer missionaries in Yoruba) petitioned Venn objecting to the consecration of S.A. Crowther. See J.F.A. Ajayi, Christian Missions

In the 1860's the Niger area presented a new challenge and a new opportunity to Venn. If a European missionary effort was difficult due to the climate, and if one of the problems of the traditional method was a conflict between the mission and church, could not an all-African mission answer both of these questions. In addition, the cost to the Society would be less, both in salaries and capital outlay. Furthermore, because the returning exiles had been so successful in Yoruba, surely they would be as successful in the Niger. On the strength of these arguments Venn persuaded the Archbishop to consecrate Samuel Crowther as Bishop on the Niger in 1864.

Upon Crowther's consecration the second Diocese of the Anglican Church was established. This diocese was never delimited. It took in vaguely all of West Africa except those areas under British jurisdiction such as Lagos, Sierra Leone, and the Gambia, which were under the Bishop of Sierra Leone. It was, however, in the area from the mouth of the Niger, four hundred miles inland to Bida where in fact, Crowther spent his life. It was in this area where his reputation was to be established.

Much was made by C.M.S. leadership and Anglican periodicals of this mission. It was an experiment which aroused

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and the Making of Nigeria 1841-1891, Ph.D. thesis, London, 1958, pp. 418-19. For opposition from the younger generation of missionaries (Faulkner, Wood and Maser) see Herskovits, Liberated Africans, p. 450.

considerable interest. Its expected success was to be an eloquent answer to those who were disparaging the Negro race. The Niger, with its African staff and leadership was to prove that educated Africans could carry the gospel successfully to the interior of the continent.

The difficulties faced by Crowther in the Niger Diocese have been fully discussed elsewhere,[7] but must be briefly reviewed here. Four peculiarities made Crowther's situation unlike that of the Bishop of Sierra Leone. First, there were the long distances over which he had to travel, much of it on foot. On the river, transport was irregular and in the hands of commercial companies who were not interested in the passenger trade. Even after Crowther used his own boat the seasonal flow of the river left the upper Niger without supervision for long periods.

The latter years of Crowther's episcopate were ones of commercial struggle between the European companies on one hamd and the African coastal tribes and Sierra Leonian merchants on the other. On the middle Niger, Crowther's African ministers were closely related to, and sympathized with these merchants, and opposed the European trading houses. In the Delta, the Christians of Brass and Bonny, along with their pagan neighbours, were the middle men who were being squeezed out of the trade. In this struggle

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7. Ajayi, Christian Missions, pp. 555-99.

the English missionaries sided with their English compatriots in business.

The Niger area encompassed a wide variety of tribes. There were three distinct groups: the coast people of the Delta, the Ibos of the middle Niger, and the Muslims, speaking a variety of languages, on the upper Niger. The tribal situation was unlike the Yoruba area in which the Europeans had been missionaries since the 1840's. In this area there existed a similarity of language and custom, a valuable asset to the missionaries for translation and mobility purposes. Another outstanding trait of Yourbaland was the large numbers of returning Christian emigrants who provided ready-made Christian communities to welcome and support the missionaries. Trained priests returned with the emigrants, many whom were related to the people. The C.M.S. had Egba ministers to work in Abeokuta, Ijesha ministers of Ilesha, and Ibadans for Ibadan.

None of these favourable conditions existed on the Niger. Translation work was extremely complex. There were few emigrant Christian communities or ministers. With the exception of two or three Ibos and one Hausa minister, Crowther had to work the area with Yorubas. These men, like Europeans, had to study the language and adjust to foreign customs. Because of the dialect problems, Crowther could not freely shift his clergy to prevent their close association with the politics of the tribe. Furthermore, on the upper river, the

the Niger clergy were involved with a Muslim population. New methods of evangelization were necessary if Christian congregations were to be gathered from among these people. Lastly, Crowther was not an independent bishop with an established revenue. He was a missionary bishop dependent upon the C.M.S. for his salary and subject to its control. As long as Henry Venn dictated C.M.S. policy, Crowther could rely upon support, not only because of the personal friendship between these two men, but because they viewed the missionary problem in much the same way. A change of leadership in the C.M.S., coinciding with a clash of European and African commercial interests on the Niger, seriously weakened Crowther's support in London.

The success or failure of the Niger experiment must be judged against the background of these facts. On the positive side, it can be said that the Niger Mission penetrated further inland than any other on the West Coast. Crowther was the first to meet Islam advancing from the north. He realized that the chiefs were particularly interested in missionaries for the education they provided. He successfully persuaded them to finance the schools and so removed a financial burden from the mission funds.

In 1890 work on the upper Niger was still in the pioneer stage and extremely feeble. In the Delta, however, a flourishing church with a cathedral at Bonny, had been established. In 1892 the Delta church contributed £748 to its support,

a figure which compared favourably with other missions. The Yoruba interior, for example, in 1892 contributed £517.[8]

Between 1880 and 1890 antagonism grew between European and African traders, and between European and African clergy. Exaggerated reports reached London of the low morals of the ministry and laity of the Niger Mission. A number of Europeans were sent throughout the decade to report. Generally these reports were unfavourable to the Africans, but they differed widely, and contradicted each other in their recommendations-- one reporting that certain clergymen were unsuitable, another the following year praising their work. A type of disguised European supervision was gradually introduced in the 1880's. In the latter years of the decade a large number of Europeans were sent to the Niger, and so began the purge of the Mission associated with the names of J.A. Robinson and G.W. Brooke. In December, 1891, Crowther died. The issue raised in the purge became involved in the issue of Crowther's successor. If the purge was justified, Crowther's episcopate had been a failure, and he should be succeeded by a European. If it was not, the advantages of an African bishop were as strong in 1891 as they had been in 1864.

The purge of the Niger Mission undertaken by G.W. Brooke and J.A. Robinson in 1890 which resulted in discrediting

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8. C.M.S. Annual Proceedings, 1893.

the Sierra Leonian clergy, was more than simply directed against the African agency. Brooke and Robinson were convinced that the whole missionary approach to the heathen was wrong. They sought to change the traditional West Coast missionary method. They would have been critical of any West Coast, or indeed, of any African mission. Brooke mentioned that the purge of the C.M.S. Niger Mission was only the beginning.

> Do not foster the theory that the evils we have unmasked are confined to the Niger and are not to be expected in other C.M.S. circles in Africa, because the other places must also be inspected and purged, where possible of similar wickedness and imposture.[9]

There was a difference. Had Brooke and Robinson attempted their purge in an English supervised area such as the Yoruba states or Sierra Leone, they would have had their appointments terminated, supposing they had been successful in getting their reports beyond the bishop or mission secretary. The C.M.S. in any case, would have ignored them especially if those in the field had been as unanimous as the Niger agents were, in their opposition. But the ideas of the anthropologists of African inferiority, so stoutly challenged by Venn and his generation, were beginning to affect the younger members of the C.M.S. committee. Advice from ten Africans no longer equalled the report of one Englishman.

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9. Brooke to Lang, Aug. 6, 1890, C.M.S. G3 A3/O no. 124. Brooke talked of two great revolutions in the C.M.S.-- one on the Niger under his leadership, and one in East Africa under Douglas Hooper. See D.C. Crowther to Lang, Feb. 12, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 93.

The story of the Niger Mission simply cannot be comprehended without a clear understanding of the deep racist feeling of the English embodied in almost all communications to and from the C.M.S.. This is the only explanation for the credence which the C.M.S. gave to reports so contradictory, so incomplete, so defamatory to a whole race.

Brooke's plans for the evangelization of Africa were to centre around European missionaries who would adopt African customs. They must dress in Native clothes, eat Native food, live in Native style houses, and teach in Native fashion.[10] The schools were to cease catering for the Sierra Leonian traders, and discontinue the production of clerks for the Niger Company. The curriculum should stress Christianity and crafts. It should prepare children for Native society rather than clerical posts. It should graduate evangelists for the Native society and not of the Sierra Leone type, interested in material benefits.

> There is no hope of success until we have first taken down the whole of the past work so that not one stone remains upon another. I mean that the pastors... must be changed, the time, mode and place of worship must be changed, the school children must be changed and the course in the schools must be changed.[11]

Graham Wilmot Brooke was an unusual man. His outstanding ability and total consecration to the mission cause,

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10. Brooke imitated Muslim Mallams. He sat on his verandah and Muslims came to him and sat at his feet to learn. As he taught he brushed verses of scripture in Arabic on small boards which he gave to the students when the lesson was over.
11. Brooke to Major Gen. J.Tough, June 5, C.M.S., G3/A30, no. 93.

greatly impressed the C.M.S. Parent Committee, and the Europeans with whom he came in contact. He impressed his fellow missionaries by his devotion and spirituality.[12] On the other hand, Archdeacon Crowther, the son of the bishop, called him a racialist.[13] His letters in both form and content were unique. They were typed in turquoise ink and signed with his full signature in purple. The thick purple pencil was used to underline for emphasis and for decoration.[14] His forceful manner of writing gave the impression of a man intolerant of other points of view. He had a singleness of purpose-- dedication to the purge of the Niger and the conquest of the Sudan for Christ.[15]

Brooke was twenty three years of age, "hardly out of boyhood"[16] when in 1889 he was accepted as an honorary

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12. Report of J.S. Hill to the Archbishop of Canterbury, (hereafter referred to as Hill's Report). Dec. 20, 1892. C.M.S. G3 A3/O 1893, no. 6.
13. D.C. Crowther to Lang, Feb. 12, 1892, C.M.S. G3 A3/O, no.93.
14. See any of Brooke's letters during 1890-91. For example, Brooke to Lang, May 28, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 169.
15. During the year 1891, Brooke became preoccupied with death, seeking it, glorifying it. He gave the C.M.S. instructions in minute detail on how they were to behave in case of his death. See W.G. Brooke, "Steps to be taken in the event of my death." n.d. C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 103.
16. S.G.S. "In Memorium" The Intelligencer, May, 1892, p. 369. Brooke's father was Lt. Colonel Robert Wilmot Brooke of the Sixtieth Rifles. His mother was the daughter of Sir Duncan Macgregor and sister of the well-known Rob Roy, "The Sudan Mission Band", The Christian Workers, April, 1890, pp. 112-3, C.M.S. F4/6.

missionary by the C.M.S.. He was not of Anglican background[17] and appeared attracted by ideas current among the Baptists during the 1880's, that the missionary must be free from the control and discipline of a missionary society. His views had been confirmed by Baptist missionaries in the Congo.[18] Brooke finally achieved his aim. He was permitted to join the C.M.S. as an honorary missionary, supported by a special committee organized in Manchester which printed and distributed monthly leaflets written by Brooke.[19]

Even from a casual perusal of his private papers it was obvious that Brooke was peculiar. He boasted that the passengers on the ship to West Africa not only thought him odd, but hated him intensely.[20] He recorded his finances in embarassing detail and kept a meticulous chart of his correspondence. His letters indicated a preoccupation with the political affairs of the Niger.[21] He possessed a strong military feeling and looked forward with anticipation to participating in the defence of Lokoja against the Nupes

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17. Intelligencer, Feb. 1889, pp. 123-4 and C.M.S. Register, no. 1148.
18. Brooke to Leonard Shaw, Oct. 13, 1887, Stanley Pool, Congo, C.M.S., F5, bdle 2, also Brooke to his father, Aug. 22, 1887, Congo Hotel, Banana, C.M.S. F5, bdle 2.
19. The first Monthly Leaflet was published for Jan. 1890, see C.M.S. F4/6. The last one, number 20 was written by Dr. Battersby March-April, 1892 after Brooke had died. C.M.S. F4/8.
20. Brooke to M.G.B. (on boat to Congo), n.d. and Brooke to M.G.B., n.d. C.M.S., F5/1.
21. Brooke to Callender, Oct. 1891. "The State of Lokoja Politically", Private and Confidential, C.M.S., F5/1.

even though conscious that this was contrary to the spirit of his missionary vocation.[22]

In religion he leaned toward fanaticism. There was much oral confessing in his company.[23] He admired the Moravians who voluntarily became lepers, and told the Niger Company that if he became destitute in the Sudan he would willingly sell himself as a slave to tend camels or labour in the garden.[24] His Journal noted such items as nude wrestling and reading novels which he later described "disobedient folly" and "drinking poison."[25] He maintained a most unhealthy relationship with his few African disciples from whom he demanded complete submission.[26]

Brooke discredited his reports from the West Coast by recording his sources of information. In no single instance does he report a conversation with anyone sympathetic to the Christian community. A Hausa officer gave him the "facts" about Lagos Christians. G.Rose, who had broken from the Anglican Church and was then, like Brooke, an independent missionary informed Brooke on the Niger and Sierra Leone. Brooke said of Rose that although "his manner was

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22. Brooke to his father, Feb. 12, 1892, Lokoja, C.M.S. F5/1. Brooke decided to become a missionary after failing "under rather peculiar circumstances in an army examination", "The Soudan Mission Band", The Christian Worker, Apr. 1890, pp. 112-3, C.M.S.? F4/6.
23. Brooke's Journal, Feb. 1890, pp. 180-1, C.M.S., F4/7, (hereafter noted as "Journal").
24. Brooke in conversation with Flint, Journal, p. 52.
25. Journal, pp. 53, 87.
26. Brooke's formal dismissal of Salim C. Wilson as his "working companion," Apr. 17, 1888, C.M.S., F5/1.

nervous (somewhat) with that anxiety not to give offence which is rather too prominent in West Coasters," yet, "I watched him for suspicious signs but I certainly believe the man was genuine." The conversation which followed was a rare example of subtlety on the part of Rose. He carefully drew out from Brooke his attitude, and then supplied the examples from the Christian life of West Africa to confirm what Brooke wanted to hear. At one point Rose strayed, but Brooke led him back by a question which suggested its own answer.[27]

Throughout his journals, letters and reports, Brooke never once substantiated by reasonable evidence his charge against the Africans. His descriptions were loaded with phrases which indicate a profound antipathy to the Black race. Sierra Leone was a "den of thieves" and Sierra Leonians the "very worst on the coast," being "crafty traders," "depraved Coast Negroes," "with rascally-looking faces," who made a "clever assumption of child-like simplicity."[28]

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27. Journal, May, 1889, p.74.
28. Journal, Mar. 31, 1889, p. 18 and Apr. 3, 1889, p. 22 also Brooke to his father, Aug. 22, 1887, C.M.S. F5/2 and Leaflet no. 6, July 1890, C.M.S. F5/5. H.H. Dobinson, a Niger missionary, who like Brooke, stopped for short periods in Freetown, analyzed why many Europeans who had contact with Sierra Leone disliked the people. He admitted of having picked up a prejudice from these Europeans. "The fact is, the Englishman has to behave himself in Sierra Leone. He cannot swagger, and curse, and kick the natives to his heart's content as is too often the case elsewhere. In Freetown the Natives can get quick and sure redress, for it is a well-known fact that the Courts are almost always inclined here to give every case in favour of the Native. So our blustering fellow-countrymen have to be careful." His sister, Letters of Henry Hughes Dobinson, (hereafter,

The Niger mission too, was a"den of thieves" and the Niger clergy were inmates fit for the den. Macaulay was "painfully obsequious," Johnson, "untruthful and overbearing," Coker had "a most sinister unpleasing expression," Smart was "a fat man with a most repulsively soapy manner," Peters was "unutterably idle" and "oily," Grant was a "Sierra Leone rascal."[29]

Brooke was intolerant of any material progress of the church on the Niger. He complained that one house costing two hundred pounds and good enough for white ladies was inhabited by an African who would be happy in one costing five or ten pounds. He made fun of Bishop Crowther because he would not allow one of his clergymen to move into a house costing twenty-five pounds because it had no iron roof or plank floor. And again, this house was fit for Europeans.[30] The church at Bonny he described as a credit to its European builder and a disgrace to the Africans who secured the funds for its construction.[31]

The redeeming of slaves, he described, as disguised

Dobinson, His Letters) London, 1899, letter dated March, 1896, from Freetown, pp. 193-4.

29. Brooke to his father, Feb. 24, 1889, C.M.S., F5/5, Journal, pp. 46,67,80,116,118,120.

30. Journal, pp. 39 and 67. The first mission houses on the Niger for Europeans were built at Onitsha. The total cost of two such houses was £2600. Dobinson in mentioning this commented, "we are very costly and expensive usefulness; our accomodation, passage, and allowances eat up far more than two thirds of the mission expenses at present." Dobinson, His Letters, p. 178.

31. Journal, p. 77.

slavery but soon was complaining that these slaves would not leave the Christians and that the schools were only serving the Christian slave-children. On the other hand when Robinson redeemed a slave, Brooke wrote a long defence of domestic slavery.[32]

When Brooke was confronted with large and regular congregations he observed that "their continual attendance is proof that sin is not exposed...." He constantly criticized clergymen for their choice of texts for sermon. When Archdeacon Crowther preached on the Christian's need of a sanctuary, a rather apt text for small bands of Christians in the Pagan Niger, Brooke poked fun at it.[33]

It did not take Brooke long to remedy the situation in his own station-- Lokoja. He called a conference of the Native agents at Lokoja, heard their advice and then completely overruled them. He accused all the Christians of fornication, closed the class books "with a bang," and excommunicated the entire membership by a public pronouncement. He demanded a public confession of sin before members were re-instated. He drew a scarlet line in the church which separated the saints from the sinners and refused to allow the sinners to contribute to the Sunday offertories.[34]

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32. Journal, pp. 59, 81; Leaflet no. 5, Aug. 1890, C.M.S., F4/6.
33. Journal, p. 82.
34. "Conference as to Steps to be taken on Evil Lives of Christians," Lokoja, June 29, 1890, J.A. Robinson's Journal, pp. 270-1, C.M.S., F5/4; Leaflet no. 6, July 1890, C.M.S., F5/4 and Brooke's Journal p. 273, C.M.S., F4/7.

In the face of these measures the Christian community, both White and Black stood firm. The church emptied and never filled again. Brooke preached to his own mission staff who publicly confessed, presumably to hold their jobs. Brooke expressed surprise that the Christians thought that an empty church would force him to leave.[35] Later he complained that he was unable to get acquainted with the Christian community, an unconscious admission that his purge of the Lokoja church had been undertaken before he became acquainted with the congregation.

Brooke introduced a congregational form of government whereby the membership (his mission staff) plus the European missionaries voted for the admission of new members. Disputes arose immediately among the missionaries as to whether applicants for membership were converted and some missionaries refused to sit on the council.[36]

The Parent Committee of the C.M.S. acting on Brooke's instructions, disconnected the African clergy on the Niger. Only the bishop had the power to withdraw licences, and this Crowther declined to do until he had been informed of the

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35. Leaflet no. 7, Jan. 1891, C.M.S., F4/8. This leaflet was written by J.A. Robinson, and is in the form of a defence of the severe discipline which had been introduced into the church at Lokoja. The Black members could only show their hostility by absenting themselves from services but the White members possessed more formidable weapons. The Niger Company officials slighted the missionaries socially, and sent their complaints to Flint, until Brooke and Robinson were forced to back down. Brooke's Journal, pp. 274, 286.

36. Journal, pp. 272, 277.

charge against his clergy. The Parent Committee refused to reveal these charges. Thus the dismissed clergy were free to seek positions outside the C.M.S. but within the Church of England; in the independent pastorates of Sierra Leone, Lagos, and the newly formed Delta.[37]

Brooke interpreted the reluctance of the Parent Committee to press charges as a lack of confidence in himself. He threatened the C.M.S. by stating he would go to Cambridge and expose their methods and the corruption of their missions, not only on the Niger, but everywhere in Africa.

> We are one and all convinced that the subscribers confidence in the Society's method of administering its missions in this continent is utterly misplaced, and it is our duty either to inform them of the fact and of our reasons for our belief, or to see that method radically changed.[38]

Brooke arrived on the Niger in April, 1889 as an independent missionary. After a six month tour of inspection he returned to England. While on board ship he drew up a memorandum of the problems he faced in urging the C.M.S. to reform. He felt that he had best remain in England as a "commentator."[39] He decided that there was a "party of reform"

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37. A Pastorate resembling that in Lagos and Sierra Leone was being hurriedly organized to frustrate English control extending to the Delta area of the Niger Mission.
38. Brooke to Lang, May 28, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 169, Brooke was reported as having said that he would not hesitate to invite the Baptist to take over the Niger because he did not approve of C.M.S. methods. See D.C. Crowther to Lang, Feb. 12, 1892, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, no. 93.
39. Journal, pp. 148-9.

at Salisbury Square which would be too cautious to challenge the elder members who were sympathetic to Bishop Crowther. In fact the Bishop he saw as the most formidable reactionary because of his wide influence in England. He knew that J.B. Whiting would fight against him. Originally he had classed Eugene Stock as a possible reform leader in the Committee, but Stock had questioned some of Brooke's more vociferous statements and accused him of insincerity.[40] He now dismissed Stock as a "diplomatic temporiser" and far too cautious a reformer to suit his purpose. Brooke feared that Robinson "who has a lurking awe of dignitaries" would back down because the Bishop's case "will seem so strong." Brooke had no idea which side Cust would take but felt it was important to influence him to the side of reform. Brooke finally decided he was the natural leader. "I think I can infuse vigour, and unanimity into them...." He then decided that his policy would be to recommend sending Crowther as an advisor to the Bishop of Yoruba and that Henry Johnson must go. This he would make an absolute point of principle "Johnson is fit for nothing but to be cast out, I cannot conscientiously withdraw this." He was convinced that should the Bishop and Johnson be removed "all the other points would be carried with a rush.[41]

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40. Brooke to Lang, July 16, 1889, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1889, no. 114.
41. Journal, pp. 148-9.

The reform party at Salisbury Square was to be assisted by a public attack on the Niger Mission launched at Cambridge "to promote speedy action."[42] Should the reform party succeed Brooke was willing to join the C.M.S. as honorary missionary to the Niger, he and his party supported by a Committee in Manchester.

Brooke's movements in England are unknown, but two things become clear by his subsequent actions. He must have felt the reform party was in control of the Parent Committee for he offered and was accepted as an honorary missionary before returning to the Niger. Secondly, the reform party at Salisbury Square was hampered in its object by the inconsistency of the various reports from the Niger Mission. When Brooke returned to Africa he set about to remedy this situation.

Brooke returned to Africa in February 1890. In July he called the Niger missionaries together at Lokoja for an informal meeting. Here the previous reports on the Niger Mission were read and the report then being framed was harmonized with the older reports to make it "as powerful a weapon as possible." Individual missionaries' reports were read out and amended to prevent conflicting evidence. Furthermore, it was decided that each missionary should write to as many members of the Parent Committee as possible

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42. Brooke to Lang, Lokoja, July 16, 1889, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1889, no. 114.

insisting that all communications from the Niger Mission be read out in full Committee.[43]

From this Lokoja meeting the missionaries proceeded to the famous Onitsha Finance Committee Meeting with Bishop Crowther and his African clergy. Charges were brought against the Niger clergy; the pastors, plus Archdeacon Crowther, were suspended and the Bishop resigned from the Committee.[44] The Onitsha meeting brought the whole issue of the Niger before the public in England and in Africa. Within a month Brooke was again on his way to England.

Brooke's purge of the Niger, which dismissed the African agency, was accompanied by an influx of Europeans. During the 1880's there had been an average of one European missionary a year in the mission. In 1891, there appeared eight Europeans on the Niger. In 1894, only one was left, the remainder having died or been invalided home. In 1895, nine new Europeans who fell back upon the traditional missionary method, began work on the Niger.[45] By 1895 Venn's experiment of an African agency, and Brooke's plans for the evangelization of Africa, were abandoned and discredited.

It would seem unfortunate that the C.M.S. should have allowed its agents to destroy one another on the Niger when immense areas of Africa were unevangelized. Two missionary

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43. Journal, pp. 285-6, 296.
44. Ajayi, Christian Missions.
45. C.M.S. Annual Proceedings for the various years 1891-95.

methods, both of them unique, both containing admirable qualities were discredited by being in such close proximity. Both methods might have pointed the way to new avenues of approach in Africa. But because they came into conflict, neither was given an opportunity to prove itself. Both were abandoned and destroyed.

In 1894, Henry H. Dobinson, secretary of the Mission was the only European on the Niger. He was assisted by a skeleton staff of Africans: one ordained minister, three catechists, and two teachers. Many stations formerly occupied and possessing mission houses were closed for lack of workers. Dobinson had been an enthusiastic supporter of Brooke's mission of young purifiers. Now alone on the Niger he gradually acquainted himself with the African staff and admitted to a complete change of views.

Dobinson belatedly realized the value of the African agents. They were the ones who did the work, even if supervised by Europeans. Supervision at this point was of secondary importance, for many of the stations were closed. He appealed for more Sierra Leonian workers and insisted that Europeans were a nuisance and should not be sent out until sufficient Africans were employed to teach them.[46] The C.M.S. informed Dobinson that it did not intend to

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46. Dobinson to Baylis, Feb. 26 and Mar. 29, 1894, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, nos. 47, 60.

introduce Sierra Leonians to the Niger again. The regulations were framed in such a manner that they would find it undesirable to work there.[47]

Dobinson protested. He questioned how the Niger Mission was to be carried forward in the next fifteen years before indigenous catechists could be trained.[48] Dobinson's letters over the period of the seven years he was connected with the Niger, were an excellent study in the change which can come over an expatriate as he gradually becomes familiar with the indigenous people and culture. In 1890, after his visit to Brooke, Dobinson claimed he had learned a few lessons at Lokoja. When he returned he excommunicated the entire membership of the Onitsha church. His Native workers including his interpreter abandoned him, leaving him helpless.

When Brooke had left and Dobinson was alone on the Niger he underwent a complete change of attitude. Six years later he was called the friend of the African and was warmly received by African congregations.[49] Dobinson was one of those rare individuals who not only could change his mind, but could openly admit his former error. This admission he made not only to the C.M.S. authorities at Salisbury Square, which was relatively easy, but also to the congregations of West Africa. It was undoubtedly this open

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47. Dobinson to Baylis, June 7, 1894, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 76.
48. Dobinson to Baylis, June 7, 1894, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 76.
49. Dobinson, His Letters, pp. 62, 66, 195.

repentence and apology which turned Dobinson from one of the hated Niger purgers to the African's friend in the space of six years. There is little question that the quick return to normal fellowship on the Niger, as compared with Lagos was greatly assisted by the change of attitude of Dobinson. He admitted to the C.M.S. that in the early years of Brooke and Robinson, "I was hurried along in unknown depths of a fierce-flowing river...." He refused to preach in St. Stephens Cathedral, Bonny, because of the shame he felt for his past actions and in Sierra Leone he apologized before the church for "the sad events of 1890, when many men were misjudged, and had greatly suffered in consequence." He admitted that upon arrival he despised Native custom but was now convinced "that the people have wonderfully adapted themselves to their surroundings, and do everything for a reason of their own, and not just haphazard as it seems."[50]

Dobinson's contrition was sincere. He became the Africans' great defender. The mission agents he described as isolated and lonely, who struggle against fearful odds, working for seven to nine years without leave. They bore the brunt of the battle, while the missionary after a fitful eighteen months returned to England. The White missionary was one of their greatest trials for he was "hasty and impatient and over-bearing." "The climate has much to do

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50. Dobinson, His Letters, pp. 167, 195, 216, 217, 224.

with it, but our pride has more, I think." The missionaries he called a "costly usefulness" and "unintentional oppressors." Upon his death in May, 1897, one of his African subordinates paid him one of the finest tributes any missionary could receive.[51]

The most obvious feature of the Niger purge was the dismissal of ordained and lay agents. However much dispute there might be about other aspects of this release of clergymen, there could be no questioning its thoroughness. Of the fifteen ordained Africans who worked on the Niger between 1880 and 1890, twelve were either disconnected or recommended for disconnection.[52] In 1895 there remained one Sierra Leonian clergyman employed by the C.M.S.. Five of the Niger clergy returned to the ministry in Sierra Leone, five joined the Niger Delta Pastorate, and four disappeared from the records. Of the twelve clergy released, eight were recommended for disconnection during Brooke and Robinson's purge in 1890. Of the eleven lay agents known to have been employed, only three survived the purge. Thus ended the remarkable missionary effort of the church of Sierra Leone to the Niger.

On the Niger in 1890, Brooke and Robinson sent their recommendations for disconnection directly to the Parent

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51. Ibid, pp. 171, 176-8, 224.
52. Brooke gives the total who left the Niger as fifteen and the causes as follows:- 3 adultery; 1 theft; 5 incorrigible lying; 2 incorrigible idleness; 2 resigned (shady); 2 resigned in ill health. Brooke to his father, Oct. 21, 1890, C.M.S., F 4/5, bdl. 5.

Committee. Neither Bishop Crowther nor members of the Finance Committee knew the charges upon which the disconnections were based. Robinson further complicated the situation by personally suspending Archdeacon Crowther, the bishop's son. The Society admitted that this action was illegal and an apology was sent to the Archdeacon.

Bishop Crowther stood on firm ground when he refused to cancel the clergymen's licences until the Society laid the secret charges before him.[53] Although he did not officially know the substance of the charges, there circulated rumours emanating from Europeans as to their nature.[54] Shortly before his death he wrote a defence of his clergy in which he pointed out the strenuous nature of the work on the Niger. He mentioned that the agents had to learn the vernacular, take up its translation, and deliver sermons in it twice on Sunday. They were expected to teach the day school five hours, five days a week, prepare classes of catechumens, candidates for baptism and communicants three afternoons a week. They must hear and settle disputes between converts, visit in the towns daily, and spend a certain time itinerating. Over and above this they were to manoeuvre their own canoes when journeying on the river. "Failing to do this [they are] pronounced unfit to be

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53. D.C. Crowther and J. Boyle to Hill, Nov. 29, 1892, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, 1893, no. 11.
54. H. Johnson to Hill, Nov. 26, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1893, no. 8.

retained in the employ of the Society."[55]

Lagos Anglicans were determined either to force the C.M.S. to prove the charges or drop them. They neither objected to dismissals, nor desired unworthy men in the ministry. Dismissals were not unknown. They had taken place in Sierra Leone, Lagos, and Yoruba, but never before in this fashion. The disconnected agents were not told their faults nor given a chance to improve. They had not been formally charged, given a trial nor an opportunity for defence. The accusers were their juniors in age, service and experience, and strangers to the country and people. This treatment was compared first, with that meted out to Europeans who were similarly charged, and second, with New Testament usage.[56]

It was also pointed out to the C.M.S. the damaging effect of the unproved charges and attendant rumours to personal character. The secretiveness was tantamount to a proved charge of immorality,[57] and encouraged slander. Many of those charged were left without means of livelihood. They had families to support but were too old to learn a trade. Teaching, a monopoly of the church, was not open

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55. Crowther on Agents to Be Dismissed, n.d., Received Jan. 21, 1892, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, no.16.
56. James Johnson to Wigram, Sept. 25, 1891; Lagos Memorial, Dec. 7, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, nos. 156, 13, D.C. Crowther and J.Boyle to Hill, Nov. 29, 1892; Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, nos. 11, 6.
57. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892.

to them.[58] In this atmosphere of slander and speculation, rumours began to circulate, and ultimately reported in the press, that European missionaries were involved in misuse of Niger finances.[59] Europeans in Lagos pointed out that the rumours and speculation were more disastrous to church harmony than any revelations of individual misdemeanour might be.[60] They believed that the African clergy were guilty, that the C.M.S. had only to prove it, and the Africans would accept it.[61] Similarly the missionaries believed the Europeans were not guilty and that the C.M.S. should clear their names.[62]

A Commission of Enquiry to sit in Africa was requested by Lagos and the Delta in order that the disconnected Niger agents might defend themselves.[63] The Delta churches

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58. J. Johnson to Wigram, Sept. 25, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 156.
59. Lagos Weekly Record, Aug. 15, 1891. See also W.H. Roberts to Lang, May 27, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 166.
60. Tugwell to Fenn, Aug. 19, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 143.
61. Tugwell to Wigram, Aug. 17, 1891, also Tugwell to Lang, May 23, 1892, (Private) C.M.S., G3 A2/O, nos. 143, 146.
62. W.H. Roberts to Lang, May 27, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 166. Vernal to Hamilton, May 14, 1891, and Tugwell to Fenn, Aug. 19, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, nos. 101, 139.
63. In a Memorial in 1890, Lagos asked that the disconnected agents who desired it be given an opportunity of defence. "The opportunity was not granted and the several disconnections were left to become a settled matter. Our views have not undergone any change." Lagos Memorial to Hill, Dec. 7, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, 1893, no. 13.

promised to submit to its findings.[64] Henry Johnson petitioned the Committee for a Commission; went to England to plead with the Society, and promised that he would not go to court for damages if the Commission found him innocent.[65]

Joseph Sydney Hill, a special emissary from the Archbishop of Canterbury, visited West Africa to advise on the situation, and found that the main issue, which had to be settled quickly in order to bring peace to the church, was the issue of the disconnections. The clergy must be proved guilty or cleared. He strongly recommended that a Commission of Enquiry sit in the Niger Mission to try those men ready to defend themselves.

Hill placed the C.M.S. in an unenviable position. He had in his possession the charges against the agents, and the evidence collected by Brooke and Robinson. Although, like the other Europeans, he believed the accused were guilty, he claimed that if all the evidence he possessed were substantiated by witnesses, no judge was likely to condemn the agents on the strength of it.[66] Furthermore, Brooke, Robinson and Crowther, the main witnesses had died in 1891-92. The Society was further embarassed to find that the rumours of European misdemeanour were true.[67] Hill, bishop-designate of the Niger, was aware that his success as bishop would

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64. D.C. Crowther and J.Boyle to Hill, Nov. 29, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1893, no. 11.
65. H. Johnson to Hill, Nov. 26, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1893, no. 8.
66. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892.
67. Ajayi, Christian Missions.

depend largely on his ability to amicably settle this question. He and his assistant Oluwole, used all their influence to secure employment elsewhere for the agents.[68]

It would seem peculiar that today, seventy years later, the charges against the clergy, upon which so much hinged in this critical decision in mission history, cannot be produced. Except for Brooke's brief list quoted in footnote fifty-two, they are still not available. Until they are produced the interpretation given here, is the only one possible for the unbiased. It was even doubtful (contrary to his written statement) whether Hill felt the clergy were guilty. If so, would he have sought the re-employement of the three which Brooke accused of adultery? It would seem that the charges were used as a mask behind which the mission was determined to choke the trend to African leadership. Whether the charges were true or not, was never the real question. Any move to assert African leadership usually brought forth the same charge of adultery against the leaders of the revolt. It was again employed to discredit the schismatics of 1901.

A kind of justice prevailed in the end. One agent died uncleared, but all the others were finally re-employed (the last in 1898) by the churches in Sierra Leone and the Delta. Had the C.M.S. wished to completely clear itself

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68. Hill to Lang, June 25, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 148; also Dr. Oluwole to C.M.S.; June 27, 1893, and J.S. Hill to C.M.S.; Oct. 24, 1893, C.M.S., G3 M, (1893-1904).

and restore maximum confidence in Lagos and the Delta it should have forthrightly apologized to its African agents as Hill recommended in his report. But the fact that it did not do so, coupled with its attempt to keep Sierra Leonians from working in the Niger Mission gave the impression that although it could not prove the charges, it believed them. The C.M.S. was merely postponing the difficulties.

The Africans were not entirely helpless in the face of these disconnections. Little could be done on the middle Niger, for work still remained in the pioneer stage. The clergy depended upon the Society for financial support because congregations were small and membership practically non-existent. But in the Delta, the church was in a healthier state. The Delta church was the most outstanding example of Bishop Crowther's labours. Christian work was begun by the bishop at Bonny on April 29, 1865. In the short period, 1865-1890, Christianity had expanded more extensively than in the whole of Yoruba, excluding Lagos and Abeokuta. The four main clergymen in the Delta, D.C. Crowther, James Boyle, John D. Garrick, and Walter E. Carew had been associated with the work almost from the beginning. These men were intimately connected with the Delta church; had witnessed its phenomenal growth, and were unlikely to stand aside and watch the English step in and, "tear it down."

It was this desire to "pull down" the mission which prompted Bishop Crowther to plan a Native pastorate in

the Delta resembling that prevailing in Lagos, so that the people and clergy with a minimum of outside interference, could control the affairs of the Delta. When questioned by the C.M.S. regarding this hasty action, the bishop replied that it had been forced on him by the English expression "we cannot build unless we pull down." Crowther felt this "pulling down" was approved by the C.M.S.. One of its periodicals had commented, "we cannot help supporting them." [the Europeans].

> This being the case I determined that this pulling down should not extend to the Delta Mission.[69]

Bishop Crowther was deeply and painfully hurt by the European behaviour and appeared to lose confidence in the C.M.S., chiefly because of expressions in the Intelligencer which had pronounced the Niger Mission a failure.[70] Acting upon pressure from the clergy of the Delta, Lagos and Sierra Leone, Bishop Crowther drew up the Niger Delta Pastorate scheme on May 8, 1891 to be inaugurated in January, 1892. He informed the C.M.S. that Lagos and Sierra Leone were unhappy with the introduction of English supervision on the Niger, and were offering financial assistance until the Delta was self-supporting.

> I feel convinced that the suggestion of the churches of the Native Pastorate of Lagos and Sierra Leone is providential, that the

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69. Bishop Crowther to Lang, Dec. 1, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, 1893, no. 15.
70. Allen to Wigram, Dec. 22, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, no. 18.

> Delta district should be made a Native Pastorate, to be worked entirely through Native agency toward the expenses of which they resolve to contribute a supplement.[71]

The church in Sierra Leone became active in the cause of the Delta church through the efforts of Archdeacon D.C. Crowther who spent part of 1891 on furlough there. The men prominent in the movement to support the Delta financially were a denominationally mixed group. They wrote to Bishop Crowther in March, 1891 offering financial assistance for "the spread of the gospel and elevation of the race."[72] In October a canvassing committee was formed which had collected £600 by the beginning of December.[73]

European observers in Sierra Leone felt that little or no financial assistance would come from Sierra Leone, as the church there was not self-supporting. However, when the money was raised they said it was because "the matter had been treated as a race question" and coercion used.

> ... pecuniary help has been given by not a few, not because they approve the plan, but because they are forced to do so, to avoid being boycotted or otherwise persecuted.[74]

As early as March, the Sierra Leone committee appealed to Lagos to assist the Delta. Lagos formed a Delta Finance

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71. Crowther to Lang, Dec. 1, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 15, [illegible] 1893.
72. Sawyer, Betts, Thomas to Bishop Crowther, Mar. 17, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 137.
73. Humphrey to Archdeacon Hamilton, Oct. 20, 1891; Allen to Wigram Dec. 8, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, nos. 251, 304.
74. Bishop of Sierra Leone to Wigram, Aug. 7, 1891; Humphrey to Hamilton, Oct. 20, 1891; Allen to Wigram, Dec. 8, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, nos. 202, 251, 304.

Committee in April under the chairmanship of James Johnson, and supported by prominent members of the Lagos Pastorate. The committee noted that the Delta required £700 from external sources, and passed a resolution that it would raise £350, and thereafter for five years, a gradually decreasing amount. They justified this action on the assumption that European supervision was "calculated to prevent the healthy growth of self-reliance and manly independence."[75]

The £350 was not raised by public subscription, as in Sierra Leone, but was guaranteed by a few prominent men, mainly members of Christ Church.[76] Although Johnson convened the first meeting of the committee, J.A.O. Payne was the inspiration behind the movement to challenge C.M.S. control in the Delta.[77] Popular opinion wanted a pastorate fashioned upon the Lagos pattern; a majority desired Europeans employed in educational work, and a minority pressed for the total exclusion of Europeans from the Delta. A few wished to set up an independent undenominational church.[78]

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75. James Johnson to Bishop Crowther, Apr. 21, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 137.
76. Tugwell to Fenn, Aug. 19, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 139. Christ Church, where the European community and the most-Europeanized Africans of Lagos worshipped, was directly under the C.M.S. and a European clergyman, and did not come under the pastorate like the other churches of Lagos.
77. Tugwell to Lang, Nov. 13, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 179.
78. Tugwell to Fenn, Aug. 19, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 139.

The deputation (William Allen and Archdeacon J. Hamilton) sent to investigate for the C.M.S. took the peculiar view that James Johnson had convinced some of the desirability of a Native Pastorate, and persuaded the others to keep quiet.[79] They repeatedly referred to Isaac Oluwole,[80] principal of the Lagos Grammar School as the man representing the soundest views in Lagos. He was rewarded by the C.M.S. and earned an unpopularity in Lagos which was one of the main causes of schism in 1901.

The man with the influence to impose a settlement on the Delta, acceptable to Lagos, was James Johnson. The C.M.S. were not unaware of his feelings. He wrote to the Society in September, 1891, outlining not only why he supported a pastorate for the Delta, but also setting forth his theory of missions. He favoured the scheme because he felt the Delta had reached the point where the people were able to, and should contribute to the Native agency. He pointed out that he had presented a memorandum to the Society in which he expressed the belief that the Society had been ill-advised in not transferring financial responsibility more rapidly. He recommended that self-support be introduced much earlier while the people still remembered the zeal

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79. Report of the Deputation to the Niger (hereafter, Deputation Report), Mar. 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 87.
80. The deputation interviewed Bishop Crowther and J. Johnson once, and Isaac Oluwole three times. See Hamilton, Narrative of Visit to West Africa, n.d., C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1892, no. 76.

and self-reliance "they had maintained and exhibited in and toward heathenism."[81] Lagos and Sierra Leone he said, had been dependent so long upon foreign support that they had come to that stage where it was difficult to maintain racial harmony. Prejudice had arisen on both sides. There was a want of confidence between the races and a temptation to distrust each other's motives.

Johnson assured the C.M.S. that no one in Lagos contemplated severance from the Society, nor did they desire action in which the Society did not take part. He was sure some assistance would still be welcomed from Europeans in the Delta. The Society would lose that control "which comes of financial dependence" but would have the moral influence such as existed between a child and its parent. He asked the Society if they would have objected had the usual grant-in-aid system been used. He said that he saw little difference and much to commend "... the supply of grants-in-aid by members of sister Native churches and others who sympathize with the cause instead of the Society...."[82]

In August 1891, Herbert Tugwell, the European pastor in charge of Christ Church, Lagos, called a meeting of the congregation. After hearing the views expressed, he wrote to the C.M.S. asking them to take the African public into

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81. J. Johnson to Wigram, Sept. 25, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 156.
82. Loc. cit.

its confidence. He was sure the public would be loyal if all the issues were placed before it.

> My experience with the African character is that when treated with confidence and when persuaded of the integrity of his advisers' motives he is loyal and true.[83]

Tugwell recommended that a deputation be sent from the C.M.S. to the Niger and suggested that two Lagos residents join it. In November the Society acted on his advice. The C.M.S. dispatched a telegram to Bishop Crowther requesting that he delay the inauguration of the Delta Pastorate for three months to await a deputation immediately leaving England.[84] The Parent Committee sent a letter to the West African churches calculated to reach the coast at the same time as the deputation. It was not the type of letter to soothe irritated African feelings. It spoke of the "ripened Christianity" which twelve centuries had given Englishmen, and "which can scarcely be looked for except in European teachers."[85]

The Hamilton-Allen Deputation which arrived in Freetown December 7, 1891, was not intended to enquire into the feasibility of the Niger Delta Pastorate, but rather to prevent its inauguration. The deputation knew that the

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83. Tugwell to Fenn, Aug. 19, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 139.
84. D.C. Crowther to Lang, Feb. 12, 1892, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, no. 93.
85. "Letter to the West African Churches," Intelligencer, Nov. 14, 1892, p. 61.

Parent Committee was convinced of the inability of the African to run a church organization.

> As things stand you are chiefly surrounded just now by those who take a strongly anti-African view of the situation.[86]

Furthermore, their instructions forbade the recommendation of anything that tended "to recognize and perpetuate a severance between the African and European spheres of work which would probably be premature and undesirable."[87] European missionaries on the coast with whom they resided during their visit were not likely to challenge the views which they already held.

Brooke took for granted that the Native Delta Pastorate would come into existence, and advised that it be prevented from raising subscriptions in England.[88] Battersby, another Niger missionary, said Europeans in Lagos and Sierra Leone were united in opposing the Native Delta Pastorate. He advised the C.M.S. not to give in to Archdeacon Crowther, for money would not be forthcoming from Lagos or Sierra Leone, and furthermore, the Delta people did not desire to be under Crowther.[89] The Bishop of Sierra Leone confirmed the general opinion that Lagos and Sierra Leone subscriptions would lessen as the excitement abated, and submitted

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86. Allen to Wigram, Jan. 1, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 47.
87. Deputation Report, Mar. 1892,
88. Brooke to Wigram, Aug. 1, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 214.
89. C.F. Hartford-Battersby to Wigram, Apr. 14, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 125.

a plan to stop the scheme. The Diocese of Sierra Leone was chartered to extend over all Her Majesty's possessions on the West Coast of Africa, while Crowther's diocese included the area outside British control. The Delta had recently been declared a British protectorate. The Bishop of Sierra Leone thought the Delta was now under his jurisdiction. He wrote:

> ... may I not claim this Delta as my diocese, and so prevent the establishment of a native church there except under my personal or delegated superintendence.[90]

Among the missionaries, only Herbert Tugwell felt that opposition was futile; if the Delta was prepared to support its own pastors and accept the guidance of the C.M.S., he saw no reason to oppose it.[91] Claude Macdonald, Consul-General of the Oil Rivers Protectorate, came unexpectedly to the defence of the Africans. Strictly from a political point of view, Macdonald favoured African clergy because of their assistance to the government in tribal matters.[92] Macdonald claimed no intention of interfering in the dispute between the Delta church and the C.M.S.,[93] yet he chose this delicate moment to accept the position of patron of the

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90. Bishop of Sierra Leone to Wigram, Aug. 7, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 202.
91. Tugwell to Fenn, Aug. 19, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 139.
92. Bishop of Sierra Leone to Wigram, Aug. 7, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 202.
93. Macdonald to D.C. Crowther, July 6, 1892, Lambeth, Benson, l. 11g, 1892 For.

Native Delta Pastorate, and to offer Archdeacon Crowther £200 per year for industrial training in the Delta schools.[94]

Hamilton and Allen could hardly be expected to consider the African point of view with impartiality considering their instructions, and the influence of European opinion on the coast. They were confident of preventing the inauguration of the Native Delta Pastorate on the strength of three powerful arguments: the C.M.S. controlled the salaries of the clergy; they owned the land and buildings in the Delta, and they could influence the Archbishop to reject an African successor to Bishop Crowther.

The question of finance was vital. If the Delta could not support its clergy the pastorate was impossible.[95] When the deputation discovered that the needed money had been raised, it discounted this in two ways. First, it was unlikely that the external support would be maintained over the five years, the time estimated to achieve self-support in the Delta. Second, the part of the funds subscribed

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94. Macdonald to Archdeacon Crowther, July 15, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892 For. J.B. Whiting after interviewing Macdonald, asked the Archbishop to talk to him before deciding upon a European successor to Crowther.

95. "Even societies which have been most emphatic in the assertion of the theory of independence of Native churches have found in the power of the purse a sure device by which to guard infant churches from lapses or novel experiment." Dr.A.J. Brown, I.R.M., Oct. 1921, p. 489 in Allen, Spontaneous Expansion, p. 58.

by dissenters was unacceptable.[96]

The question of property ownership was almost as vital as finances.[97] Hamilton and Allen found that this land had been given before British occupation and was therefore held under African law. It was not Delta custom to part with land absolutely. The C.M.S. could dismantle the buildings. This was permitted by customary law. But this was morally questionable since the Society had not contributed to the erection of the Delta churches.

On the issue which had fostered the organization of the Native Delta Pastorate-- the disconnections, the deputation recommended that the C.M.S. have nothing to do with the scheme unless Archdeacon Crowther promised not to employ disconnected agents.[98] The Archdeacon replied that although these agents were disconnected by the C.M.S., they had not lost their licences to administer the sacraments in the Anglican Church. However, Crowther promised to consult with the committee in Lagos, and to submit to the findings of a Commission of Enquiry.[99]

In the deputation report submitted to the C.M.S. in

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96. Allen to Wigram, Dec. 8, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 304.
97. "I consider to your tenure of church property a most valuable safeguard," Bishop of Sierra Leone to Wigram, Aug. 7, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 202.
98. Deputation Report, Mar., 1892, and D.C. Crowther to Lang, Feb. 12, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 93.
99. D.C. Crowther and J. Boyle to Hill, November 29, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 11.

March, 1892, it was obvious that Hamilton and Allen were unable to give logical arguments why the Native Delta Pastorate should not be encouraged. In one part, they recommend that the C.M.S. should support the pastorate only if Crowther promised not to employ disconnected agents. In another, they stated that the Society should induce the Native Pastorate Committee to abandon the scheme, and to convince anyone appointed bishop of the Niger to delay his assent to its formation.

Unfortunately Bishop Crowther died shortly after the deputation's arrival in Lagos, and the issue of a successor became acute. Hamilton and Allen recommended that a European should succeed him, aided by a Native assistant bishop.[100]

The Hamilton-Allen report was considered by the Committee of Correspondence of the C.M.S. on April 5, 1892. In a lengthy meeting the Committee split into two opposing factions. The majority led by F.E. Wigram and R. Lang, believed that the experiment on the Niger begun in 1864 must be abandoned. Crowther's episcopate had proved a failure. They feared that the tendency to rupture and schism would be encouraged, and spread to Lagos. They resented this shrinking of C.M.S. authority. They opposed an African bishop.[101]

The minority, led by R.N. Cust and J.B. Whiting, were as firmly convinced that Crowther's epsicopate had been a

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100. Deputation Report, March, 1892.
101. The Archbishop re: the Niger, July 16, 1892, Lambeth, Benson, 1. 11g. 1892.

success. They desired to advance from the status conferred on Crowther, believing that his successor should be partly or wholly supported from African sources.[102] This would be a step toward making the new bishop a diocesan rather than a missionary bishop, and would free him even more from the control of the Society. Cust argued against the whole policy of the C.M.S.. He asked how long the Society intended to hold the African church in pupilage. He pleaded for a return to apostolic practice when each tribe or nation as it became Christian, acquired its own indigenous bishops, priests and deacons. Cust warned that unless a decided policy of extending the historic three orders of the ministry was taken now, "we shall have a frightful complication in the next century."[103]

The discussion in the Committee of Correspondence centred around William Allen's letter dated January 2, 1892, from Lagos, in which he recommended the division of the Niger diocese into two; one headed by a European, and one by an African bishop for,

> ... it would be even more that perilous to the interests of church missions in West Africa,

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102. Whiting to the Archbishop, Feb. 8, 1892, Lambeth, Benson, 1, 11g, 1892, For.
103. Cust to the Archbishop, Sept. 27, 1892, Lambeth, Benson, 1, 11g., 1892, For.

> if the desire of the Natives for another African bishop were altogether ignored by the C.M.S....." [104]

But a letter of January 29, dated Brass, signed by both Allen and Hamilton recommended that all authority should be vested in a European bishop while the inevitable retrogression should be masked by the appointment of an African assistant bishop.[105] In their formal report, dated March 1892, Allen was apparently overwhelmed by Hamilton. They recommended one European bishop.

Wigram and Lang carried the committee with them in passing Resolution XX which instructed the secretaries "to seek a suitable European to be nominated as a successor to Bishop Crowther," adding a rider intended to pacify the minority.

> ... that in passing the above resolution the committee affirm their desire that an Assistant African Bishop or Bishops with ultimate prospect of an independent African bishop should be appointed in West Africa as soon as in the interests of the church there such an appointment appears desirable.[106]

After the minority unsuccessfully attempted to defeat Resolution XX at a later meeting of the Parent Committee, Cust and Whiting resigned. Cust was convinced that the

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104. Allen to Wigram, Jan. 2, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 48.
105. Hamilton and Allen to African secretary, Jan. 29, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 75.
106. Correspondence Committee Minutes, April 5, 1892, p. 288.

racial arrogance of the English was responsible for the decisions taken on the Niger Mission. This was why missions among five generations of Christians had not yet evolved into churches; why an English curate of little ability was preferred for bishop to godly and outstanding Negroes; why the post of assistant bishop was created for the non-English. "The difference of treatment is only skin deep, and the reason only extends to the skin."[107]

The English missionaries on the Niger he called "sensational young missionaries." He criticized their reports on the moral state of Africa. They knew only one town in Africa, understood no vernacular, and yet presumed to speak about Africa. He questioned whether they had taken a good look at the vices and immoralities of London, where only a minority had been affected by Christianity, "while the majority are as much heathen in their religious conceptions, and as free from moral restrictions, as our forefathers were" in pre-Roman Britain.[108] Cust blamed the paid secretaries, Wigram and Lang, for taking upon themselves the responsibility for decisions and their execution,

> ... until a promising mission like that in the Niger Delta, is destroyed by the blind and wayward, folly of an uninstructed Committee,

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107. R.N. Cust, Evangelization of the Non-Christian World, London, 1894, pp. 188-9, 222.

108. Ibid, p. 233.

> driven by impulsive secretaries, determined to have their own way.[109]

Cust was the voice of Johnson, Crowther, and Payne in England. He cut through the mass of propaganda with which Wigram's party was able to fill the C.M.S. organs of information. Eugene Stock, another paid secretary, and great admirer of Wigram attempted to make Cust appear an inconsistent aberation in the progressive and enlightened C.M.S.. But Cust was eagerly read and applauded by Africans in Lagos and by the Niger missionary, Henry Dobinson.[110]

Upon the resignation of Cust and Whiting, the secretaries complied with Resolution XX and nominated J.S. Hill to the Archbishop as a successor to Crowther. Because of the publicity given to the unrest in Lagos and the Delta, and because of the split in the C.M.S. Committee, it was doubtful whether the Archbishop would accept Hill's nomination without further enquiry into the causes of the discontent. The Archbishop became a mediator between the two parties within the C.M.S. and between the Society and African Christians.

Joseph Sydney Hill, was attached to the majority party. He felt a debt to the C.M.S. for his education and training, and had the closest ties of friendship with Wigram and Lang.[111]

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109. Ibid, p. 140.
110. Stock, History, III, pp. 668-9; Dobinson, His Letters, p. 185.
111. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892.

Like them, he believed there was an immense danger of encouraging the spirit of dislike toward European control, by giving a premium to revolt. Hill was convinced that Whiting and Cust were encouraging the Africans to agitate.[112]

Archbishop Benson, accepted Hill as the successor to Crowther. Aware of Hill's relationship to Wigram and Lang, the Archbishop warned him that his duty lay in working out a just and fair solution, and not in attempting to please the Society.[113]

The Archbishop laid down the lines of a solution. He suggested that the diocese be divided; that two English bishops be invested with authority and each assisted by an African assistant bishop. He did not consider that the time was ripe for a diocesan African bishop. As to the persons to be consecrated for the position of assistant

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112. Hill to Battersby, Sept. 30, 1892, also Hill to Wigram, Oct. 2, 1893, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, nos. 224, 72.

113. Edward White Benson, Archbishop 1883-1896. Archbishop Benson in the early years of his primacy laid great stress upon the creation of national churches, "not merely branches of the Church of England working in foreign lands...." He warned against repeating "the error of the great Boniface, in making not a Teutonic but an Italian church in Germany." (1885) In 1886 he encouraged the Bishop of Japan to establish a Japanese, not an English church. (Benson to Bishop Bickersteth) Towards the end of his primacy he did not adopt this liberalism in dealing with the Canadian and Australian churches. His biographer comments upon this contradiction. See A.C. Benson, The Life of Edward White Benson, vol. ii, London, 1899, pp. 456, 466, 467 and 484.

African bishops, he was willing to have anyone nominated, preferably James Johnson and Archdeacon Crowther. The Archbishop was not prepared however, to consecrate Hill at the present time. He desired that Hill should go to West Africa as his special emissary with the status of Bishop-designate, to report upon the unrest in the Lagos and Delta churches.[114]

The Archbishop's proposals were laid before the C.M.S. on July 19. The Committee appreciated that Benson had accepted their nominee for bishop, but disliked the idea of assistant bishops because of the "undesirability of making the experiment of placing an African bishop over European clergymen."[115] If the Archbishop forced assistant bishops upon them, Wigram and Lang were determined it should not be James Johnson or Archdeacon Crowther. They tried to extract a promise from Benson that he would not accept the nomination of these two men. The Archbishop refused. It was quite vital to the success of his plans that Johnson and Crowther be won over to the compromise.[116]

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114. Archbishop re. the Niger, July 16, 1892.
115. Wigram to Archbishop, July 13, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892. For.
116. Correspondence Committee Minutes, Apr. 5, 1892, p. 288, Archbishop re. the Niger, July 16, 1892: On July 13, at 9:45 a.m. Archbishop Benson held a "very long interview" with Wigram and Lang. At 4:10 p.m. he held an interview with Hill in which he emphasized that assistant bishoprics should be pressed on Johnson and Crowther. "Nothing could have such effect in winning the coloured dissenters." Official Diary of Archbishop Benson, Trinity College Library, Cambridge, p. 195. Following the interview Wigram wrote the Archbishop

Wigram and Lang were determined. They wanted the consecration of an English bishop, but opposed assistant bishops in general and Johnson and Crowther in particular. If they could persuade the Archbishop to consecrate Hill immediately, they could then put difficulties in the way of future appointments of assistant bishops. Benson, aware of these tactics, was adamant. He would either authorize the consecration of three bishops (Hill and his two African assistants) or none at all. After another interview with Wigram and Lang, Benson felt he had, "brought them around to see my mind."[117] But the Archbishop had forced, and not convinced them. Wigram warned Hill not to nominate Johnson or Crowther. Should he do so, Wigram threatened to use his influence in the C.M.S., to make Hill's episcopate in West Africa an unhappy one.[118]

(See Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892 For.) strenuously objecting to Johnson and Crowther being offered episcopal positions.

117. Archbishop re. the Niger, July 16, 1892: Benson's Official Diary, July 22, 1892, p. 204.

118. Wigram to the Archbishop, July 13, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892, For. The persistent stubborness of Wigram may have been one of the causes of the Archbishop's public criticism of the mission societies in 1894. He accused them of working independently of the church (especially the C.M.S.) and being unable to handle outstanding men in the overseas churches. Benson possibly had Crowther and Johnson in mind when he said: "There are no men I more highly esteem than Mr. Tucker (S.P.G.) and Mr. Wigram, but I should like to see what they would do with a Saint Martin!" Stock, History, 111, p. 652.

In Lagos, the death of Bishop Crowther overshadowed the issue of the Niger Delta Pastorate and the disconnection of agents. An African successor to Crowther became the crucial issue. James Johnson saw the importance of this moment to Africa, the Native churches and African Christianity. He called it a crisis "that very much for or against ourselves depends on the decision and action we take...."[119]

The subordination of the African agency, and later the disconnection of agents on the Niger, was an indication that the C.M.S. had come to the conclusion that Crowther's episcopate was a failure. Equally disturbing was the publicity given to this failure in Anglican and C.M.S. periodicals.[120] Articles in these publications came to the attention of the African public through the West Coast press. The people knew that the Niger Mission had been found a failure, and that this pronouncement had been accepted by a number of leading members of the Parent Committee.[121]

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119. J. Johnson to Cust, July 19, 1892, Lambeth, Benson, 1, 11g, 1892, For.

120. The Rock, Jan. 28, 1891; The Record, Jan. 28, 1891; The Intelligencer, Oct. 1890 said it had in its possession some very encouraging reports from the Niger written by the Secretary of the Mission, F.N. Eden. These reports were never published.

121. The press also gave publicity to speeches of the members of the Parent Committee and one by the Archbishop "which is interpreted to mean, that you have already made up your mind upon the subject, and have decided against the Natives, and accepted the opinion of the European missionaries." Hill's Report, For a warning re. the effects of the press, see Wood to Fenn, Aug. 3, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 140.

Africans could not afford to allow Crowther's episcopate to be labelled a failure. It had been "an experiment to prove the capacity of Negroes for evangelizing... the African continent... without the stimulus of the presence and supervision of Europeans." Moreover, they were convinced that Crowther's episcopate had been a success, a success which supplied " a warrant for the continuation of the Native episcopate."[122] They feared what they called "the drift of the Society's mind," which had increasingly been evident.[123]

> But attempts have been made the last few years on account of moral weakness discovered in some of the infant churches which have been gathered in, and serious faults in some of the agents and the like, to pronounce the experiment a failure and the Negro incapable for a responsible trust and for an independent life; and in spite of the century of training and teaching he has had, unfit still to be set free from his pupilage and the leading strings of European supervision.... In our humble opinion the arrangements proposed, backed as it seems with the weight of the Archbishop's position, seems to lend its sanction to this pronouncement.[124]

The unrest was more than religious. It was also "patriotic and political." Africans had come under the spirit of the age. Just as the cry rang out "Australia for Australians" so in Lagos it was "Africa for the Africans."

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122. Lagos Memorial to Hill, Dec. 7, 1892,
123. J. Johnson to Cust, July 19, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892, For.
124. Lagos Memorial to Hill, Dec. 7, 1892.

Because racial feeling was rising among English and African, "the seed of discord [had] fallen into a prepared and congenial ground."[125] Crowther had become a symbol to Africans of all tribes and creeds of the improving position of the Negro in the world.[126] James Johnson suggested that this racial feeling could be minimized by dividing the diocese; one diocese under a European and worked largely through European agency and the other under an African worked by Africans. This, he claimed, was the only way friction between European missionaries and African church workers could be avoided. This friction had in the past, "exercised a depressing influence upon the work." He feared the proposal of African Assistant Bishops would not remove but "rather perpetuate and accentuate the evil."[127]

Johnson approached the problem from the general theory of missions. He felt, like Cust, that African Christianity had been "held too long in a state of dependence." As a result, Christianity after one hundred years was still exotic. In this there was no guarantee of permanence. He pointed to North Africa and Benin as examples of exotic Christianity which passed away.[128] The C.M.S. decision

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125. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892
126. J.Johnson to Cust, July 19, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1 11g, 1892, For.
127. Lagos Memorial to Hill, Dec. 7, 1892.
128. Loc. cit.

in favour of an English episcopate,

> ... has been its own practical pronouncement of the failure of its own efforts during ninety years to christianize the people and raise up among them independent and self-governing Christian churches.[129]

Hill arrived in Lagos October 5, 1892, as bishop-designate of the Niger, and personal emissary from the Archbishop. He brought with him, from the Archbishop, a message of peace and a command to report upon the Delta Pastorate; divide the diocese, and choose assistant bishops. Hill's most difficult task was to break the barrier of his own position, a European in succession to Bishop Crowther. He did this through a genuinely Christian display of deep humility. He was unwilling to attempt a defence of European actions on the Niger, even if he was not ready to publicly condemn them. His offer disarmed Lagos.

> ... the last thing I would do, is to remain in office if my appointment is unacceptable to you.[130]

The clergy pointed out that they had asked the C.M.S. to appoint an African to succeed Crowther, but the Society had appointed a European. Although their feelings had not changed, because Hill was the appointed European, the subject was now a delicate one and the argument closed.[131] The situation and its outcome operated exactly as the Archbishop

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129. J.Johnson to Cust, July 19, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892, For.
130. Hill, Memorandum Prepared before my Interview with the clergy and Representative Laymen. Nov. 1892, C.M.S., G3 A2/C, no. 6.
131. Lagos Memorial, to Hill, Dec. 7, 1892.

expected: if Hill went out as Bishop-designate Lagos, "will be too nervous to assent to what they wish at the time viz. a coloured bishop."[132]

The Lagos clergy and laity were still desirous that the Delta be made a separate diocese and an African appointed there, who would be a successor to Crowther. Hill attempted to persuade them that to refuse this request, was not a reflection upon the episcopate of Crowther. It was neither because the C.M.S. wished to recede from its former position of giving them a Native episcopate; nor was it because there were no suitable Native clergymen available for this position.[133] It was rather because great extension of the Native church organization was necessary in the Delta, before the Archbishop would be willing to consecrate an African diocesan bishop. He further encouraged them not to look to the Niger, but rather to Lagos and Sierra Leone for an extension of the indigenous episcopate.

> It is in those places where the Native church is more exclusively at work, and where it is most efficiently organized and where its development is most advanced that Native episcopal supervision would most naturally be sought.[134]

Hill argued that it was of great importance, when the present action was spoken of as a retrograde step, to realize that Crowther had not been an independent bishop,

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132. Archbishop re. the Niger, July 16, 1892.
133. Hill to Wigram, Oct. 2, 1893, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 72.
134. Hill, Memorandum, Nov. 1892, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, 1893, no. 6.

but a missionary bishop accountable to the C.M.S. in all his actions. So, also the assistant bishops would be responsible to a European bishop.[135] The clergy reminded Hill that there had been no church organization when Crowther had been consecrated and yet, this was now a prime consideration before his successor could be appointed. It was only too obvious that the C.M.S. had lost confidence in African bishops, for while a European could be appointed without this organization and only on the strength of an oath of allegiance to the Archbishop, an African could not.

The clergy and representative laymen of Lagos presented a memorial to Hill in which they set forth their ideas for the future governing of the diocese. It ended-

> ... should he (the Archbishop) still decide to consecrate none other than a Native Assistant or Native Assistant Bishops, we shall feel that we have discharged our responsibility, and would respectfully submit to his better judgement and decision.[136]

By this "submission" Lagos gave away its only bargaining point. The C.M.S., European missionaries and Hill had moved ever so cautiously because of the great fear that, unless the African point of view was acted upon, there would be a schism embracing the Delta, Lagos and Freetown.[137] Hill had won, and was quick to point it out to the

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135. Loc. cit.
136. Lagos Memorial to Hill, Dec.7, 1892.
137. Wood to Fenn, Aug. 3, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 140, also Cust to the Archbishop, Sept. 27, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892, For.

Archbishop.[138] There were possibly three reasons for this "submission." It may have been the reaction to Hill's humility and the belief that by going the extra mile they should persuade the C.M.S. to do the same. Perhaps they felt that the battle was already lost, and that it was preferable to submit to their new leader gracefully. Plausibly it was an attempt to secure unanimity since the Memorial was signed by the conservatives as well as the radicals.

The results were far reaching. By submitting to an arrangement which they were unable to defend before the general laity, the clergy abdicated their position of leadership. In mission organizations the hierarchical order was simple and direct from the missionaries at the top, to the parishioners at the bottom. The clergy occupied the potential friction point between the two. They were the employees of the missions carrying out their directives, as well as the mouthpiece of the laity. They were both servants and leaders. Normally this gave the clergy a degree of influence. The position had now become untenable. The missionaries refused to modify their policy and the parishioners refused to accept it. A compromise was impossible and the choice was either submission or rebellion.

They chose submission. Partly due to habit, and partly because they were conscious of where ultimate

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138. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892.

authority lay. But it was more than this. The clergy suffered from the chronic disability of the educated African. They admitted that they lost respect for African leadership in the process of an education which was as much the acquiring of English attitudes as it was a familiarization with academic skills. The clergy emerged from their training as sceptical of African leadership as their English counterparts. As a consequence the clergy in 1888 voted against an African bishop for the Yoruba country. As a result the African professional class preferred an English clergyman to minister to them at Christ Church. The clergy, along with the professional class of which they formed a part, were as reluctant to work under a black bishop as were the English. Thus Lagos and Freetown agitated for an African bishop for the Delta, but not for themselves. The clergy were acting as the mouthpiece of the laity without a personal conviction that African leadership was really desirable.

Under these conditions Crowther's success on the Niger was more than statistical. His betrayal by the English was not abated by his faithful clergy who lost their means of livelihood rather than be tools in the missionaries' hands in the way which the leadership of James Johnson was discredited in Abeokuta in 1878-80.[139]

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139. J.K. Coker, History of the African Church, 1941, Coker Papers.

The submission was mainly a tragedy for James Johnson who had chosen to emphasize his postion as leader rather than servant. It left him little room to manoeuvre, but he had no intention of abandoning his policy of working towards an African church. In future his advocacy would be considered treasonous to the new arrangement which was not an "experiment" and as such, subject to review as was Crowther's episcopate. The settlement was to be permanently endowed with a sanctity which made criticism intolerable. The missionaries, realizing how closely they had come to losing control, would in future deal severely with the clergy who showed signs of deserting them and espousing the popular cause of African leadership.

After two months in Lagos, Hill sent his report[140] to the Archbishop on December 20, 1892. He recommended the division of the diocese into three:-[141] the Niger Delta under an African bishop; the Niger under an English bishop; and the Yoruba diocese to which Lagos would be transferred, should be under an English bishop, assisted by two African assistant bishops, one over Ondo and one over Lagos and Ijebu. For an interim period of two or three years, the three dioceses would remain under one English bishop until the reorganization could be carried out.

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140. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892.
141. The first division of the diocese occured in 1919 and the second in 1952.

The Delta diocese should be delayed until it was properly organized; present difficulties settled; a suitable man Johnson or Crowther chosen and an endowment provided. The appointment of a Delta bishop should not be rushed "as if these men were agitating for their own advancement." Some people might "look upon it as a premium given to quiet them." He suggested however, that the Archbishop give a definite promise to consecrate a bishop for the Delta when the church there was "doing steady and satisfactory work."

Hill's choice of assistant bishops was important for the immediate future if he was to gain the support of the Africans for the major recommendations of his report. Johnson and Crowther, the obvious choices, although acceptable to the Archbishop, were not to the Society. English opinion on the coast opposed both men. It was admitted that Johnson had qualifications which made him suitable for episcopal office but, "unfortunately he holds views and adopts methods in carrying them out which... would... be the cause of... very serious embarrassment."[142] Hill did not cease to admire Johnson, but took on some English attitudes toward him.

> I admire him, I sympathize with him, but he is not liked.... He is decidedly the ablest man we have, and the most crotchety, opinionated, onesided, intolerant, zealous, earnest

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142. Wood to Hill, Oct. 19, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1893, no. 7.

and powerful.[143]

Missionaries were unanimous that Archdeacon Crowther would not do. Opposition must not be rewarded. Furthermore, he soured as he grew older.[144] Hill chose Isaac Oluwole, the principal of the Grammar School in Lagos and the Rev. Charles Phillips. Both were supported by the missionaries. Oluwole had the reputation of not going beyond his position and causing friction with his superiors. He was reported to be "most beloved by the clergy and laity of Lagos."[145] Nothing could be further from the truth--an example of the lengths to which missionaries would go to get their own way. Phillips was called the most spiritual man among the clergy, and an aggressive missionary, an attribute necessary for the pioneer work proposed for him in Ondo. One thing remained clear. The natural leaders were overlooked in favour of men who were acceptable to the English missionaries, and to the committee in England.

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143. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892. I have seen it mentioned in secondary material that J. Johnson was offered an assistant bishop's position by J.S. Hill, but neither Hill nor Johnson refer to it in the primary material of this period. See E.M.T. Epelle, The Church in the Niger Delta, Port Harcourt, 1955.

144. Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892, and Wood to Hill, Oct. 19, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 7.

145. Wood to Hill, Oct. 19, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1893, Hill's only objection to Oluwole was that his wife was too Anglicized. See Hill's Report, Allen reported that there would be serious objection in Lagos to the consecration of Oluwole. See Allen to Wigram, Jan. 2, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 48.

Taken as a whole, Hill's compromise was satisfactory; he did his best with a complicated situation. He risked total rejection in Lagos or London. Had the report been implemented there is reason to believe it would have satisfied Lagos. It recommended a Commission of Enquiry into the disconnections.[146] It promised within two or three years to provide a diocesan bishop in the Delta in succession to Bishop Crowther,[147] and requested an apology from the C.M.S. for the behaviour of its European agents on the Niger.

Had this been the entire substance of the Report, it would have been totally objectionable to the C.M.S.. The interim settlement was acceptable for it assured English control. Johnson and Crowther were not recommended for assistant bishops. The assistant bishops were given jurisdiction over areas where no Europeans were employed, which overcame Wigram's objection to placing Africans over Europeans. Hill, aware that the report might be

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146. The Parent Committee disconnected one clergyman, H.S. Macaulay, while Hill was in Lagos. Correspondence Committee Minutes, Nov. 1, 1892.

147. Hill asked the Archbishop to promise an African successor to Crowther in his Report of December 20, 1892. In October Hill changed his mind, possibly under pressure from Wigram. He considered it unwise "to make any promise, or plan for the future, until we are assured of their fidelity, stability, and spirituality." See Hill to Wigram, October 2, 1893, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 72. The Archbishop nevertheless made the promise. "I am ready to take the necessary steps as soon as the development and organization of your church justify such an appointment." See Archbishop to Delta Pastorate Church, October 12, 1893, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 72.

unacceptable, offered his resignation to the Archbishop.[148]

The report was a fair analysis of the situation in the Anglican mission. Had it been carried out in the following decade, it was possible the schism of 1901 might have been avoided. But it was most unlikely that the C.M.S. would have ever allowed its full implementation as long as Wigram and Lang were powers in the Parent Committee. As it happened, Hill only lived long enough to carry out the interim recommendations. The Society ignored the body of the report.

Hill, Phillips and Oluwole were consecrated on June 29, 1893, bishops of the Niger diocese, now renamed the Diocese of Western Equatorial Africa. The date was carefully chosen. It was the twenty-ninth anniversary of Crowther's consecration. What tragic irony for Africans. The new settlement-- a blatant reversal of the past-- paraded as a forward step in the Venn tradition. It was the ultimate humiliation. In December, the three bishops accompanied by the largest party of English missionaries ever sent forth at one time, arrived on the West Coast.

There was no public welcome in Lagos. The laity, brushing aside their docile clergy, sought among themselves

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148. Hill apologized to Wigram for his criticism of the C.M.S. in his Report. See Hill to Wigram, Dec. 21, 1892, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, 1893, no. 5: Hill's Report, Dec. 20, 1892.

for leaders.[149] If the clergy had been emasculated by their training, many of the laity were not so afflicted. The boycott was total. Lagos was in mourning. Only the pulpits of Christ Church (Tugwell) and St. Johns (N. Johnson) were open to the new bishops. The assistant bishops were in an unenviable position. Never before in Lagos had episcopal authority rested so slightly upon African support and depended so heavily upon English. Bishop Phillips summed it up, "... if we do not enjoy the full confidence of the Parent Committee, our position will become most intolerable and difficult."[150] This was the final mockery. No other African leaders would ever enjoy the stubborn, insistent support which the missionaries gave the assistant bishops. Feted in England and pampered in Africa they became the symbols of indirect rule within the church--the African facade behind which the English governed.

January, 1894, was called "Black January." Bishop Hill died on the fifth, his wife hours later, followed by four of the newly arrived missionaries. Considering the health measures common on the coast, it was supposed such a tragedy was impossible in 1894. A wave of sympathy, which surprised the missionaries in its intensity, swept over Anglicans in Lagos. The largest congregation in Lagos

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149. Tugwell to Baylis, Jan. 8, 1894, C.M.S., G3 A2/C, no. 7.
150. Bp. Phillips to Wigram, Dec. 26, 1893, C.M.S., G3 A2/o, no. 15.

history assembled to mourn at the double funeral for Bishop and Mrs. Hill. It was a clear indication to the assistant bishops that they were the major objects of dislike.

The force of this display of divine power was sufficient to convince one European missionary that the policy was wrong. He changed his mind entirely, recommending that Europeans pull out of the coastal areas leaving them to the care and supervision of African bishops. They might make errors, but would learn by their mistakes. He called for a mass C.M.S. exodus from the coast to the interior.[151] The effect on Africans was the reverse. Black January broke the organized boycott of the new system. It did not change African views, but it gave the assistant bishops a chance to prove themselves.[152]

Herbert Tugwell was immediately summoned to England and consecrated Bishop of Western Equatorial Africa on March 4, 1894. Hill's report was shelved and ignored.

The years 1890-1894 were years of crisis for Christianity in West Africa. The Niger experiment of 1864 of evangelizing Africa by means of an African agency under the supervision of an African, was pronounced a failure in 1890. By 1891 almost the total missionary staff, clerical

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151. Dobinson to Baylis, Jan. 25, 1894, C.M.S., G3 A3/O, no. 36.
152. Tugwell quoted in the Intelligencer, vol. xix, 1894, p. 610.

and lay, had been recommended for disconnection. The bishop and his two archdeacons were subordinated to European supervision.

Bishop Crowther, leader and supervisor of the Niger Mission since its inception, was discredited in the eyes of the English. Crowther had been a symbol of the regenerated Africa, of the Negro race rising through education and Christianity to the highest position in the African church. To his disparagers, Crowther's supposed failure was not the failure of one man-- it was the failure of the race.

The Black Bishop of the Niger was a symbol to particularly one small but powerful group on the West Coast of Africa-- the educated and Christian liberated slaves, commonly called the Sierra Leonians. He was a symbol of this group upon whom missionary societies depended for the evangelization of Africa; upon whom humanitarians relied for the carrying of western civilization to the interior; and upon whom commercial companies counted to bring western goods to African households.

To discredit Crowther was to discredit the Sierra Leonians. To discredit the Sierra Leonians was to say in effect, that Africans, given the benefit of education and Christianity, would never fully rise to the status of the English. If Crowther, who was admitted a scholar and Christian, could not succeed, how sadly would the vast

majority fail?

The English did not understand this. Most Africans on the other hand, could see it in no other way. Looking forward to 1920 or to 1950 it could be said that the Africans saw the issue correctly. For indeed Crowther became, not only the symbol of the failure of the Black race, but of all non-whites the world over-- the "raison d'etre" for the all-white episcopacy in the Anglican Church.[153]

The issue of the episcopate was settled. The Settlement of 1894 assured English control of the highest offices in the African mission for the next half century. Sixty years later the church discovered that while the senior political and administrative posts in the government were passing into African hands, the church lagged behind with an English episcopate. Until 1894, the African had been "in the habit of looking to the church for a more immediate advance in his social and political power."[154] After 1894 he searched elsewhere. The hesitation of the Missionary Societies to entrust the highest position in the church to Africans created the sharp distinction between Mission churches and African churches. It delayed for sixty years

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153. Stephen Neill, Anglicanism, London, 1958, p. 341 also, Allen, Spontaneous Expansion, p. 191, see G.F.S. Gray, The Anglican Communion, London, 1958. p.69.
154. Hill's Report, December 20, 1892.

any commencement towards Africanization of theology or ceremony. Some men looked to the African churches for outlets for initiative, others turned to politics. By the nineteen fifties those in political activities were realizing their ambitions. The missions belatedly fell into line. There was irony in an African nationalist slogan "Seek ye first the political kingdom and everything else shall be added unto you."[155]

155. On Nkrumah's statue in Accra.

PART II

The Causes of the African Church Movement.

> That this meeting in humble dependence upon almighty God is of opinion that Africa is to be evangelized and that the foreign agencies at work at the present moment taking into consideration climatic and other influences cannot grasp the situation; resolved that a purely Native African Church be founded for the evangelization and amelioration of our race to be governed by Africans. (W.E. Cole and D.A. Gloster, U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 14, 1891.)

During the formative period (1891-1921) the African Church Movement developed into five major denominations which claimed the adherence of one third of the Christian Yoruba, and one fifth of the total Christian population of Southern Nigeria. Each of the protestant mission societies-- the C.M.S., Wesleyan Methodist and Southern Baptist-- experienced a revolt within their membership which resulted in the establishment of an African Church essentially similar to its parent society.

The African churches were a revolt against changing mission practice in the twentieth century but lightly veiled under proclamations of adherence to policy laid down in the nineteenth century. Broad and liberal theories aiming to create churches culturally identified with Africa were replaced by policies of stifling conformity which sought

to produce in Africa an exact replica of the parent denomination.

Policies of conformity pursued after 1891 were not entirely new. They originated in the controversy over English missionary bishops (1853-62) which the C.M.S. opposed because they made an indigenous episcopate "forever unattainable." Once foreign control was established it would not be easily given up. The C.M.S. attempted to circumvert the obvious goal of English control by the appointment of Crowther as a missionary bishop to inaugurate the Native episcopate. On the issue of polygamy it was the C.M.S. who became the conformists in Venn's Memorandum of 1857 which was labelled intolerant by high church opinion.[1]

By 1891 the policy of conformity had triumphed in dogma and the episcopate. The Lambeth ruling against polygamy in 1888, a pronouncement against the entire social system of Africa, placed the authority of the church behind Venn's Memorandum. By the succession of a European to Crowther, the C.M.S. rejected Native leadership realizing the advantages of an English episcopate to insure the Society's control. Control became a paramount consideration. If a foreign code was to be imposed upon Africa, it required foreigners to impose it.

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1. Stock, History, II, pp. 13-14, III. p.646.

No compromise with the new policy was possible. The choice was either submit or revolt. The African churches who chose revolt found no champion or spokesman on the international missionary stage. Civil rebels against the abuses of political imperialism found a voice even if a feeble one, in England. Religious rebels found none. They became not merely rebels, but outlaws. They remained on the defensive against the overwhelming tide of foreign money, foreign personnel, foreign government, foreign education and foreign thought, which swept the mission societies along to statistical success.

The policy of conformity and the revolt which it induced were the result of the evangelical revival associated with the Keswick convention in England and West Africa. Between 1883 and 1890 the Evangelicals in England were involved in a purist movement emphasizing "sin," "holiness," "perfection" and "submission to the will of God." Although opposed by the high and broad church parties, the movement remained within the Church of England.

Many felt that total submission and the greatest sacrifice of self-will to God's work lay in accepting work in the "submerged half of the world" outside Christendom. As a result, in the year 1890 there was an unprecedented exodus of missionaries overseas. Upon offering for the mission fields, their submission to the will of God

became self-assertion against the restraints of the missionary societies which contained older elements of nineteenth century tolerance. Four groups of youths, Brooke's Niger party being one, refused to work within the framework of the C.M.S. but on a basis of association with it-- a useful device to avoid the responsibilities while enjoying the benefits of the Society.

The young recruits, products of a movement to revive the traditional moral code of England, preached against the sins of the flesh while failing to recognize their own sins of the spirit. They lacked tolerance, the feeling for another society, or appreciation for different social mores and moral codes. They brought a strong contrary influence to bear upon the mission field from the earlier nineteenth century missionaries some of whom had become cognizant of the virtues of Native morality.

As a result of the Keswick excitement, travelling "Missioners" visited Lagos and Freetown in 1886 followed by others in 1888 and 1889. The missioners were surprised they were not confronted with the "lapsed masses" as in England, but with churches crowded to capacity. Unable to comprehend a moral system different but not necessarily as bad as that in England, they dwelt at length upon the sins of the flesh. African congregations accepted this in the relative privacy of their own churches. When the

missioners returned to England and spoke as if "sin" was the exclusive habit of the Africans, it aroused a flood of bitterness in Lagos.[2]

Only James Johnson's parish, St. Pauls Breadfruit, escaped condemnation. There the missioners were struck "by evidence of real spiritual life." Johnson was ascetic by nature and the spirit of Keswick found a quick response in his nature.

Prior to the special missioners, Johnson had held conversion meetings in St. Pauls and a number of young men, who later became the founders of the African Church, received personal experience of salvation. Inspired by Johnson's sermons they developed a burning desire to carry the gospel to the Yoruba people, and in their lifetime to see Christianity become the national religion of the Yorubas.[3] This desire was partly religious and partly patriotic just as many of the newly recruited English were activated by mixed religious and imperial interests. The Keswick upsurge of missionary enthusiasm coincided with a new wave of imperial expansion.

The Keswick revival produced a generation of missionaries willing to use moral reasons to deny black leadership,

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2. Stock History, III, pp. 30, 285-8, 364, 369, 378-9, 382. Lagos Weekly Record, July 12 and 19, 1890.
3. J.K. Coker, "The History of the African Church", 1941, Coker Papers. J.K. Coker, "The African Church", The African Hope, Feb., 1922, pp. 12-13.

and supporting imperial expansion as a means to the evangelization of Africa. Keswick hastened the missionary impulse in Lagos among a group of men who interpreted the moral slurs against black leadership and the support for imperialism as designed to exclude them from leading the expansion of Christianity.

The settlement of 1894 which rejected an African successor to Crowther, and created assistant bishops, was a clear victory for the spirit of Keswick. Lagos Christians believed that by rejecting African leadership the evangelization of Africa was indefinitely delayed. The missionaries were able to crack the hard shell of paganism, but they lacked the ability to gather a Christian church, usually producing converts to Islam, where a black agency was waiting to organize them.

Following the settlement of 1894 one measure after another was taken to retain supreme control of the church in English hands. The promise of territorial jurisdiction for assistant bishops was dropped except in the case of one white assistant bishop. The Archbishop of Canterbury's promise of a Delta diocesan bishop was forgotten. The educational qualifications of the clergy were lowered so that the next generation would be at a more decided disadvantage to their English counterparts. Constitutions subordinated the clergy to the bishop in the same way the missionary was subordinated to the Society. The synod,

its constitution prepared in England, was dominated by laity of the "right kind," and aroused little interest. An ecclesiastical province was urged upon the bishops at a number of Lambeth conferences. The urging was ignored.

Similar policies were pursued by the Methodists. They reduced the status of their black clergy by removing them from the common roll. They divided their synod into European and mixed rather than clergy and laity. African district superintendents were gradually eliminated.

Meanwhile in both societies self-support was pushed until church and fund raising became synonymous. While the English-raised budget remained static between 1895 and 1920, the Anglicans were noting in 1920 that African funds would soon cover the total expenses of black and white workers.[4] This was a reversal of 1890 when English supervision was introduced to look after English money.

Among the Baptists the financial trend was reversed. Their budget increased eleven fold between 1895 and 1920 dwarfing African contributions which as late as 1914 had exceeded those of the Society. If the trend was different the results were the same. The expanded funds were used as patronage to favour the submissive and pressure the rebels to conform.[5]

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4. C.W. Wakeman to G.T. Manley, May 14, 1920, C.M.S. (Ibadan) Y, 1/2,4.
5. Baptist Mission Meeting Minutes, July 10, 1916; "The Mission Policy Regarding Polygamy," The Nigerian Baptist, Apr. 1932, pp. 51-2.

Increasing white control required turning a congregationally governed church into a hierarchy. The policy of conformity fell short of transferring the governmental structure of the parent denomination to Africa. Excuses were found for adaptations which prevented African control. The Anglicans invented assistant bishops. The Baptists reversed their tradition of congregational dominance to elevate the missionary above the congregation. Ordinations were recommended by an ordaining council which in the United States was elected by the congregation but which in Africa became the standing committee of the missionaries.[6] By favouring the submissive, the Baptists prevented the growth of a leadership class among the clergy.

The reaction of the clergy to this progression of events was complete submission. Only four of the two hundred mission clergy voluntarily joined the African Church Movement before 1920. Thoroughly indoctrinated by European teachers, chosen for their submissiveness to European control, the butt of criticism by their parishioners, without the courage of their convictions, but praised for their loyalty to the mission, the clergy of the twentieth century never attained the pre-eminence of their forerunners in the nineteenth.

The laity who refused to follow their clergy in this

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6. S.G. Pinnock to Drs. Love and Ray, Oct. 16, 1920. Baptist Mission Meeting Minutes, Jan. 12, 1921, Roberson Collection.

submission formed a continual stream out of the missions into the African churches. The missions never appeared more quiescent. This no doubt contributed to the dullness of the synods where the "right kind" of public opinion prevailed.

Under competitive conditions, Societies would have had incentive to modify the rules of discipline in the interest of more freedom of behaviour. The church might have become integrated into African society, and a new attitude evolved towards polygamy. But competition was eliminated through the agreements for comity whereby in towns and rural areas the first society to enter the district was given a monopoly.

The Society could be dictatorial in its demand for money, reserving the right to decree where the church should be built and how much education should be provided. In larger cities like Lagos, gentlemen's agreements existed whereby members disconnected by one Society were not accepted by another.[7] Disconnections became excommunication affecting vital aspects of life-- the education of children, and in some cases, the succesful pursuit of a profession,[8] to

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7. Annual Letter from the Society to the Lagos District Synod, Dec. 20, 1917. O. Griffin to Bishop Tugwell, Feb. 28, 1917, W.M.M.S.(Ibadan), 1/1/1 and 1/3/2.
8. James Johnson to Wigram, Sept. 25, 1891, C.M.S., G3 A2/O, no. 156; A.O. Ijaoye "Loss of Originality.. in the Anglican Church of Nigeria," 1918? Unpublished manuscript, Oke Collection.

say nothing of the welfare of the soul.

Africans became impatient with Societies which put so many obstacles in the way of heathen converts. As late as 1900 Christianity was almost exclusively confined to the small coterie of western educated, living in separate quarters of pagan cities which were slowly turning to Islam. The popularity of Islam was due to the same causes which sustained the growth of the African churches. Missionary teaching and other alien influences were creating a people who were losing faith in their pagan gods. They were denied membership in the missions until they possessed an intellectual grasp of Christianity and had divested themselves of wives and children. African churchmen believed this denied the workings of a divine power. The lost pagans were left in a spiritual vacuum. Intellectual attainment left a rather cold impression upon men seeking a new faith.[9]

Yoruba society sought within Islam a bulwark against the moral laxness introduced by Christians. Many believed that the pagan morals of the Yoruba were superior to those offered by Christianity. The church's duty lay in re-enforcing this code. The pagan convert was not only expected to accept a new faith, but develop a new set of values, or rather, a different conscience. It was the

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9. Mojola Agbebi, "The West African Problem" in G. Spiller, Papers on Inter-Racial Relations, London, 1911, p. 348.

time it took to develop this different conscience which caused the delay in acceptance into the mission. Into this spiritual vacuum Islam stepped, ready to uphold the known moral code and offering a spiritual exercise-- the daily prayers-- in contrast to the mission catechumen class. Upon these arguments the African Church based its evangelistic method of preach, baptize, teach, which reversed the mission's preach, teach, baptize.[10]

The African intellectual was stifled in the atmosphere created by the mission societies. The C.M.S. controlled the major printing press of Lagos. It had ample funds arising from its bookshop profits[11] to provide an outlet for African writers. But the press was white-controlled and through indifference or censorship or unfair royalty practices it did not encourage creative writing. Thus the African churches took a lively interest in the printing press. Eighty percent of all the creative literature produced before 1920 was written by African churchmen who comprised thirty percent of the Christian population. Periodically the mission executive or synod became alarmed at the dearth of vernacular and English literature.

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10. J.K. Coker "The Defence of the Order of Catechism" in Coker's sermon note book, n.d.; Coker to N.A. Cnatolu, n.d., Coker Papers.

11. 1904-1910= £4,958; 1915 = £2,000; 1920 = £2,500, various sources see Ex.Co. Minutes May, 1915, C.M.S., /G3/A2/O, no. 61; Wakeman to Manley, May 14, 1920, C.M.S.(Ibadan) Y 1/2/4.

Theological discussion relevant to the Yoruba situation was non-existent. Mission clergy or laity holding contrary views to the bishop dared not express them, while white missionaries interested in African views turned surreptitiously to African church publications.[12]

These publications occasionally stirred the bishop or a missionary to a reply. One of the best examples of the paucity of mission thinking was the synod's rebuttal to the mounting arguments of the African Church for a new policy towards polygamy. The synod of 1914, re-stated word for word Henry Venn's memorandum on polygamy.[13] Venn's arguments may have been satisfactory in 1857 when they were published, but they were inadequate defence in the more sophisticated debate of 1914.

Polygamy was only one of the issues which ought to have been widely debated in the Christian community. Chieftaincy and societies such as the Ogboni fraternity were as easily disposed of as polygamy by a snap pronouncement of an uninformed bishop without public debate.

Neither the missions nor the African churches, as

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12. J.G. Campbell, "Something We Ought to Take Note Of", Times of Nigeria, Nov. 21, 1921. E.M. Lijadu, The Effects of Foreign Literature and Science Upon the Natives of the Yoruba Country, Lagos, 1887, p. 5, Campbell, Lagos Awake, Lagos, 1923, pp. 11-13. E.E. Williams to J.K. Coker, Oct. 8, 1914, Coker Papers.

13. For the Memorandum and the African Church rebuttal, see J.K. Coker, Polygamy Defended, Lagos, 1915.

organizations, took active part in politics. It was not difficult to discover where their support lay-- usually in opposing positions. The missions applauded the extension of British sovereignty. They hesitated to challenge the abuses of imperial rule or to acknowledge the justice of protest movements. They actively opposed the early nationalist movements in 1919.[14] African churchmen were engaged in all the early protest movements of Lagos-- the land tenure question, the seditious ordinance bill, the extension of the franchise and the National Congress of British West Africa.[15]

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The first of the African churches of Lagos came into existence in 1888 out of the mission organization of the Southern Baptist Convention with headquarters in Richmond, Virginia. The Native Baptist organization which emerged did not claim to be an African church, but Native Baptist

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14. Address by Rt. Revd. Bishop Cluwole to the third Session of the Second Synod, May, 1911; African Messenger, Sept. 15, 1921, and May 18, 1922; Cust, Evangelization, p. 190; J.T.F. Halligey, "Africa and Opportunities in the West", Missionary Notices, 1898, pp. 182-5; Griffin to Brown, May 9, 1910, W.M.M.S., Lagos C.P.; M.T. Euler-Ajayi, "Annual Sermon 1907", Lagos, 1907, p. 18. A.C. (Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901-1908.
15. The African Messenger, Mar. 17, 1921; J.G. Campbell, Lagos Awake, Lagos, 1923, pp. 11-13; The African Hope, editorial, July 1920, p. 9.

as its name implied. The aim of the schismatics was to create a truly Baptist organization governed by the congregation as in the United States. After a schism in 1903 over the issue Baptist versus African, one wing of the Native Baptists-- Araromi-- aligned itself with the African churches, and its pastor became a leading exponent of the aims of the movement.

The causes of the founding of the Native Baptist were partly those which contributed to the rise of the African Church Movement in general. Others were unique arising out of the connections with a mission society in the United States rather than in Britain. Of the latter, the influence of American coloured people and the war between the states were the most powerful.

Early Baptist missionary activity centred around the cities of Ogbomoso and Ijaiye. The destruction of Ijaiye during the Yoruba civil war in 1862, forced the missionaries to withdraw. Prior to the fall of the city, the white American, R.H. Stone, and the coloured American, J.C. Vaughan, taking with them a number of the war orphans, fled to the safety of Abeokuta. During the "Ifole" (expulsion of the Christians from Abeokuta) of 1867, they fled to Lagos where they were dependent upon the slender resources of the Baptist membership.[16]

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16. Official Missionary historians, S.G. Pinnock, The Romance of Missions in Nigeria, Richmond, 1917; L.M. Duval, Baptist Missions in Nigeria, Richmond, 1928; C.E. Maddry,

R.H. Stone returned to the United States because in the financial confusion following the American civil war, remittance of funds had ceased. Between 1863 and 1875 the Baptists of Lagos were thrown on their own resources. They survived great hardship and without outside finance they maintained the cohesion of the Baptist community. The period produced a confidence and pride in African achievement and a belief in African ability which was a cause of conflict when white missionaries returned and expected the old deference and dependence. The prominent figures of the Ifole and the hard years in Lagos later became the founders of the Native Baptist Church. One African Baptist traced the roots of the independent church to this period.

> It is worthy of observation that they (the Negroes) were liberated on the ground of political expediency by the same civil war which gave self-support to the Liberian churches and subsequently to the Yoruba churches.17

Baptist survival 1867-1875 was the result of the efforts of two American coloureds, J.C. Vaughan and J.M. Harden, and of two Africans, M.L. Stone and Sarah Harden. Vaughan, born in South Carolina in 1828, emigrated to Liberia in 1847 where after six years in agriculture he joined the pioneer Baptist missionary, T.J. Bowen, on a visit to the

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Day Dawn in Yorubaland, Nashville, 1936; G.W. Saddler, A Century in Nigeria, Nashville, 1950.

17. "Address of Mojola Agbebi to the Yoruba Baptist Association" in Pinnock (ed.) The Yoruba Baptist Association Year Book, 1915, p.24. The Anglicans also lost their Christian refugees of the Ifole to an African Church.

Yoruba country. From that year forward he was a participant in the main events in Baptist history. Earning his living by carpentry and agriculture, Vaughan preached the gospel in Ogbomoso and Ijaiye. After a narrow escape from Ijaiye he and his wife opened an industrial school for the Ijaiye orphans in Abeokuta. The Ifole of 1867 closed the school and Vaughan and his students came to Lagos where he began afresh in the hardware business. A number of his boys continued as apprentices in their trades.[18]

In Lagos, Baptist work was under the coloured American, Rev. J.M. Harden who landed in Liberia with Bowen in 1853. In the following year he came to Lagos where he founded the American Baptist Church. In 1863 his support from America was cut off. He kept the church open and supported his wife and child, Samuel, by making and selling the first local building bricks ever used in Lagos. His wife, Sarah, was a Sierra Leonian, her father being one of the first graduates along with S.A. (later Bishop) Crowther from Fourah Bay College. The family came to Lagos in 1857. After her husband's death the responsibility for the refugees and Baptist work fell upon her and J.C. Vaughan. Sarah supported her son and a number of refugee children by

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18. Duval, Baptist Missions, pp. 70, 75, 76, 93; Alistair Macmillan (compiler) The Red Book of West Africa, London, 1920, p. 108; Adeoye Deniga, African Leaders, Lagos, 1919, pp. 12-13. Robert Campbell, A Pilgrimage to my Motherland, London, 1862, p. 113.

teaching and selling needlework.[19]

Six Baptist leaders emerged from the care and teaching of Sarah Harden and J.C. Vaughan: M.L. Stone, Lajide Tubi, L.D. Fadipe, the Vaughan brothers, and Samuel Harden. All but one became clergy or prominent laymen of the Native Baptist Church. Gradually M.L. Stone began to show the leadership qualities for which he later became noted. He became a lay preacher in the church, organized regular weekly prayer meetings and kept the primary school in operation. He maintained fraternal relations with the Methodist missionaries who provided ministerial functions for the church including baptism by immersion. The Baptist membership grew steadily but modestly.

Upon the return of the American missionaries to Lagos three events occurred which were common to all missionary organizations of the period and which were contributary causes of the African Church Movement. There arose the seemingly inevitable conflict of leadership between white missionary and black pastor. The missionary neglected the organization of the Native church. There was the influence of a revival with effects similar to those of the Keswick convention.

W.J. David (white American) and W.W. Colley (coloured

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19. Duval, Baptist Missions, p. 96; Agbebi, "S.M. Harden", Roberson Collection, Campos Square Cemetery, Lagos; African Times, Jan. 23, 1863, p. 75 and Aug. 22, 1863, p. 17.

American) arrived in Lagos in 1875. David, a southerner, was unlikely to subordinate himself to the established leadership of an African pastor. But the conflict of leadership was delayed. David sent Stone as an interpreter to Abeokuta and then to Ogbomoso. Stone remained for seven years (1876-1883) pastor of the Ogbomoso church. During this period he was free to act as he chose, there being no superintending missionary. Stone developed his qualities of leadership and gained the confidence of the congregation so that in February 1878 they licensed him as their preacher.[20]

David was a missionary to Lagos for thirteen years, half of which time he was resident in Lagos, the other half in America. When David returned to America in 1878 the Lagos church passed a resolution asking for Stone's ordination to the ministry as recognition for his valuable work 1869-1875 in keeping together the Baptist community of Lagos. David ordained Stone in 1880.[21] When David left on furlough to America in 1884, Stone was called to be pastor of Lagos church where he was again free for nearly two years to manage as he saw fit. In the latter part of 1885, David returned to take charge of Lagos church and Stone for the first time in his career found himself in a subordinate position. Both David and Stone were thirty six

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20. Cecil Roberson, "The First Baptist Minister of Note in Nigeria", The Nigerian Baptist, Aug. 1955, pp. 5-6.
21. In the same year the C.M.S. had fourteen and the Methodist had eight ordained Africans.

years of age.

The Baptists of Lagos were obliged to W.J. David for both the spiritual and material progress of the work. The growth in membership was steady. David had conducted successful revival services in Lagos in 1883 which resulted in numerical additions to the church and infused it with new vigour and enthusiasm. The outstanding converts were D.B. Vincent and his wife who later, reverting to their Yoruba names, Mojola and Adeotan Agbebi were the most eloquent exponents of the African Church Movement. Mojola Agbebi became a vigorous missionary, pushed the development of Yoruba forms within his church, and was recognized as the voice of the African churches in Lagos, in Britain and in the United States. He resembled the Anglican converts of the Keswick revivals in Lagos, in his enthusiasm for a national Yoruba Christianity.

By 1884 David had collected £500 in Lagos and had persuaded the Mission Board to advance £1,000 to purchase materials for a church. He chartered a ship from the United States and shipped the material to Lagos. The foundation stone of the church was laid in January 1886 and the completed structure dedicated one year later. David was also responsible for establishing the Baptist Academy which enrolled 250 when it opened in 1886. Mr. and Mrs. D.B. Vincent and S.A. Allen were on the staff of the primary

division. S.M. Harden and J.A. Harrison (English) were in charge of the upper classes. The Academy, due to the qualifications of its staff and its enrolment, became one of the leading educational institutions of Lagos.

David's theory of missions, like Stones', was in harmony with that prevailing in the nineteenth century C.M.S. and Methodist missions. He believed that Africa must be evangelized by Africans, under the training and supervision of white men.[22] His actions in sending S.M. Harden to America for education and organizing the Academy in Lagos were consistent with the theory of promoting an African missionary agency. Lagos church had passed the phase of white supervision. It was ready for self-support and the accompanying independence which that implied in Baptist polity. David had neglected this aspect of the work. With all the increase in numbers, and the large sums raised and spent on the church and Academy, Stone was still paid half of his salary by the mission and the other half by the congregation as he had been in 1880.

The years 1886-87 were years of excessive activity among Lagos Baptists-- the church was built and the Academy established. By the middle of 1887 this activity was over, and a conflict occurred between Stone and David. Both men understandably felt they had made large contributions to

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22. H.A. Tupper, A Decade of Foreign Missions 1880-1890, Richmond, 1891, pp. 170-1.

the Baptist work. Neither man had been accustomed to a subordinate position. A conflict of leadership seemed almost inevitable.

There may have been a certain jealousy on the part of W.J. David regarding the hold which Stone had over the congregation of the American Baptist Church. David may have resented Stone's extraordinary ability to preach in Yoruba.[23] For some reason inconsistent with his policy of training Africans, David refused to entertain the idea of Stone going to America. He would not use his influence, as he had done in the case of S.M. Harden, to secure finances for Stone's further training. Among the Christian ministers of Lagos, Stone was undoubtedly the poorest educated. His English was extremely weak at a time and place when command of English and education were considered synonymous. This lack of education created a feeling of inadequacy which Stone never overcame until after 1900 when he became widely known as the most eloquent of Yoruba speakers. In 1887 David's refusal to consider higher education for Stone broke down the confidence which previously existed between them.

As the actual crisis which led to secession approached, David behaved as missionaries often did in such circumstances.

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23. S.G. Pinnock, Foreign Mission Journal, (hereafter F.M.J.) Nov. 1894, p. 111 and T. Dumbley, F.M.J., June 1895, p. 337. Smith to Foreign Mission Board, Jan. 30, 1891; Pinnock to Willingham, Aug. 25, 1901, Roberson Collection.

He refused to follow recognized Baptist constitutional procedure (which was not to his advantage) on the excuse that the church was not fully self-supporting, and therefore not independent. Furthermore, in cases of friction which led to secession, the parent committee of the missionary society was usually the final court of decision to which both the missionary and the congregation appealed. If the committee waited to hear both sides of the dispute before arbitrating, and gave a verdict which had the appearance of fairness, secession was often avoided. The Lagos Methodist trouble in 1884 and the Niger Delta Anglican dispute of 1891 were examples of the parent committee influence in preventing secession. If on the other hand the Board supported the missionary unquestionably in the interests of maintaining his authority and its ultimate control, then the congregation which has lost respect for the missionary, loses confidence in the Board and the denomination. Schism usually follows.

After 1900 this danger increased as most parent committees had begun to place more power in "on the spot" authorities. Appeals over the head of the local committee were not welcomed by the missionary boards, as it was supposed contrary to the policy they were pursuing of delegating power to local authorities. It would have been wiser had the boards set up well-recognized channels of appeal at the time they were decentralizing

authority. The closing of these channels ought to have been the last act in the independence of the Native church. Ideally the Board should not have been its own court of appeal. It would have been better than nothing. Africans customarily had greater faith in the impartiality of the Boards than of their local authorities. The Methodists had this-- the English synod being the final arbiter between the missionary society and the African congregation. As a result the Methodists never experienced a schism over issues of church government. Among the Anglicans, the bishop should have been the arbiter. But his designation as missionary bishop indicated the difficulty. Bishop Tugwell was in fact (not in theory) the local authority for the C.M.S. in Nigeria prior to 1920. When the delegation of power was complete and the C.M.S. had virtually withdrawn from Lagos the bishop became the all-powerful head of the Native church. It was unwise to allow full episcopal power until Africans were appointed as bishops and the independent ecclesiastical province created. The Baptists made no provision for appeal once power came into the hands of the local missionary executive committee. The mitigating factor was the wide scope of self-government which local churches received upon attaining self-support.

In 1888 the Board first supported David, then on second thought recalled him. The result was that the

customary bitterness of schism was lessened and left open the path to eventual resumption of fellowship between the mission and the Native church. As a result the Baptist were the only denomination which succeeded in ultimately restoring amity between the estranged organization and the mission society. Had the Board openly expressed disapproval of David's action schism would have been avoided.

A second disagreement arose when Stone was unable to maintain payments on a piece of land he had purchased. He began to trade to supplement his income of sixty pounds per year.[24] David objected on the grounds that a preacher ought to devote his entire time to the ministry. Stone asked for a raise in pay which David refused. Stone resigned. A deputation of church members waited on David and pointed out that they paid half of Stone's salary. According to Baptist custom they ought to have been consulted before the resignation had been accepted. David answered that he was missionary-in-charge and pastor. Stone was only assistant pastor. He felt as free to dismiss Stone "as he would any of his servants...."[25]

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24. There were eleven clergymen in Lagos in 1888. Seven held university degrees. Stone was the only one who did not have secondary education or the experience of a Training Institution. He was also the poorest paid. Had he been an Anglican on the Niger in 1890 or a Methodist in Lagos in 1895, he would have received £100 per annum. C.M.S. Correspondence Committee Minutes, Nov. 11, 1889 and W.M.M.S., Lagos Synod Minutes 1895, Appendix A.

25. E.A. Ojo, "Historical Sketch of the Native Baptist Church", Ogbomoso, Nigerian Baptist Historical Collection, (hereafter N.B.H.C.).

A congregational meeting of the church was called for March 15, 1888. David approached the two leaders of the Stone party-- S.M. Harden and D.B. Vincent and sought their support. They refused. He dismissed them from the staff of the Academy. He approached S.A. Allen, also on the staff, and secured his support. With the head teachers of the Academy gone, Allen was promoted in status and given a raise in pay.[26] The deputation reported to a stormy congregational meeting. The members were more disturbed by David's tactlessness in dealing with the deputation than in the illegality or unbaptist nature of his action. David remained inflexible. The split in the church was unavoidable when one member warned David that "if the new church just completed was intended for a barracoon the people would leave it...."[27]

Soon after a resolution of separation was passed by fifty of the members. They began holding services in a

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26. Stone to Tupper, June 6, 1888 and Resolution of the Executive Committee, Apr. 30, 1888, Roberson Collection, Missionary secondary sources say they resigned. Duval, Baptist Missions, p. 118. In 1889 Allen was the highest paid agent in the Baptist Mission, Newton to Willingham, June 15, 1894, Roberson Collection.

27. Barracoons were depots where slaves were kept prior to shipment to America. E.A. Ojo, loc cit.. Considering these references to slaves and servants it is relevant to point out that David's attitude towards Africans left much to be desired. There are frequent references to "flogging" and "clubbing" not only of mission personel, but of tradesmen who serviced the mission. See. W.J. David's Diary, Nov. 1, 1876, Mar. 5, 1876; Sept. 23, 1876; Smith to the F.M.B., Apr. 7, 1887, Roberson Collection.

temporary shed in Stone's compound. The new church became known as the Native Baptist to distinguish it from the American Baptist Mission. It was the pioneer independent church in Lagos. Of the two hundred Baptist members, only a handful remained with the mission. All of the outstanding members joined the Native Baptists-- the Hardens, the Vaughans, and the Vincents. The recently opened Academy was closed for lack of staff.

There was a sympathy secession from the Ogbomoso church due to Stone's influence there. Three quarters of the congregation of eighty left under the leadership of Daddy Baraka.[28]

Following the secession of almost his total congregation and the collapse of the Academy, David sought endorsement for his actions. He called a meeting of the missionaries (P.A. Eubank, C.E. Smith and himself). This meeting endorsed David's actions, his refusal to increase Stone's salary, his acceptance of the resignation and his dismissal of Harden and Vincent. The meeting admitted Stone's right under Baptist custom to set up another church, but they condemned him for the spirit in which he had carried it out. A placard was prepared, signed by the three missionaries, and posted prominently. It proclaimed to Lagos that the Baptist Mission had withdrawn fellowship from Stone because he was unqualified for the ministry since he had been

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28. Duval, Baptist Missions, p. 119.

repeatedly untruthful. The same day the missionaries convened a meeting of the remaining members of the American Baptist Church which passed a resolution excluding Stone from the pulpit.[29] Rather belatedly Baptist constitutional practices were being followed.

The Foreign Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention upon hearing from the missionaries of the trouble in Lagos wrote David expressing their sympathy and support and guaranteed him their unimpaired confidence. Later the Board received a number of documents from the independent church. One was a dignified statement from M.L. Stone. He took for granted in his letter that the setting up of an independent Baptist church was in accord with Baptist practice and that the placard in Lagos was an attempt to stamp out the new church. He pointed out that the charge of untruthfulness had never before been mentioned. He questioned the missionaries' right to withdraw fellowship.

After receiving this letter the Board had second thoughts about Lagos. They questioned David's missionary methods and bluntly asked him if the missionaries would welcome the establishment of an independent church. David

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29. P.A. Eubank, Letter of Resolution to the F.M.B., Apr. 30, 1888; David, Eubank, Smith, Statement concerning Moses L. Stone. Apr. 30, 1888; J.J. Tubi to G.W. Saddler, May 25, 1922; Stone to Tupper, June 4, 1888, Roberson Collection.

replied that the missionaries would welcome an independent church, but there was no prospect of a strong Native church either spiritually or numerically. David asked the Board to abide by its initial decision and leave affairs in Lagos in the hands of the missionaries.[30] David left Lagos the following month ostensibly because of illness, but more likely because of humiliation and the feeling that he had lost the confidence of the Board. The Lagos papers implied that he was recalled.[31] This was one of the last instances of a mission board siding with an African congregation and humiliating the missionary. In the coming years missionary societies became infected with the imperial slogan that white authority must be built on white prestige. Admitting the mistakes of the individual undermined the infallibility of the race.

It was typical of secessions that the policy of the mission immediately after the crisis was of vital importance. The independents had set up a local church. It remained Baptist. They would proceed to schism (organization of another denomination) if the mission attitude remained

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30. David to Tupper, July 25 and Oct. 18, 1888; Stone to Tupper, June 4 and June 6, 1888; It is unfortunate in the light of the subsequent fellowship which prevailed between the Baptist Mission and the independent churches that G.W. Saddler's A Century in Nigeria, 1950 records the first reaction of the Board. (pp. 90-1) but not the second.

31. Tupper, A Decade of Foreign Missions 1880-1890, p. 630. David offered to return to Abeokuta or Oyo but was not re-engaged. F.M.J., Oct. 1893, p. 85, For newspaper reports see Lagos Observer, Nov. 10 and 17, 1888.

inflexible. Had David remained in Lagos schism was inevitable. With the advent of a new missionary, fellowship could have been restored without any loss of face to either side. But the new missionary took a common attitude, considering any reaction of African congregations other than submission, as "sin". He used the weapon of hinting at gross immorality among the seceders; a technique to become more familiar as the African Church Movement gained momentum . Furthermore, outside influences were working against rapprochement, hardening African attitudes and pushing them towards the African churches-- the Niger purge and the invasion of Ijebu Ode.

When the Lagos events of 1888 became known in the southern United States there was criticism of African missionary methods. The critics said that the African mission was progressing in reverse. It had lost its ablest African evangelist. Some pointed out that there was only one ordained clergyman after forty years of missionary effort. Others suggested that the missionaries should withdraw pointing out that the Liberian Baptist churches had prospered when that mission had withdrawn after the war between the states.[32] In the light of these criticisms David's replacement, C.C. Newton, was under considerable pressure to bring unity to the Baptist community of Lagos.

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32. T.P. Bell, F.M.J., (editorial), June 1891, p. 32; C.E. Smith "Small Results in Africa", F.M.J., Aug. 1891, p. 9.

He had two courses open to him, either suggest that the mission extend the hand of fellowship to the Native Baptists or attempt to destroy them. He chose the latter. The independent church was willing to return on agreed conditions; first, that the independent church membership be received back as a body, second, that Stone, Harden and Vincent be reinstated, third, that the church building be turned over to them, and fourth, that they be constituted a properly independent Baptist church.[33]

Newton insisted that reconciliation would be considered on the basis of individual confession of guilt. He was emphatic that by this act of secession the people had sinned--"a shameful fall of prominent members and teachers" he called it. The principle involved was membership submission to the missionary. He warned that if this principle was "run over rough shod" it would "give trouble in all the future of African missions." Newton insisted that the setting up of the independent church--"the shameful fall"-- had to be confessed by the individual members. He hinted that the Lagos church was full of sinners and he was taking this means of purging it. In case this condition of the church should reflect on W.J. David, its former pastor, Newton

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33. Newton to F.M.B. 1889 quoted in Proceedings of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1890, p. 35; David to Tupper, Oct. 18, 1888; S.M. Cook to Tupper, Dec. 29, 1890, Roberson Collection.

stated that the missionaries were not to blame.[34] He did not say who was.

The year 1890 was particularly unpropitious for a settlement on the basis of African submission to white missionaries. The C.M.S. purge of their Niger Mission, with its subordination of the entire African agency to English supervision, was announced. The nine disconnected Niger clergymen arrived in Lagos, and "filled the air with the tale of wrongs which they had endured at the hands of the white missionaries." A wave of bitter race feeling swept over Lagos and aroused great hostility against all white missionaries.[35]

At the close of 1890 Newton, consistent with his policy of individual confession, sent a letter to each member of the independent church asking them to return to the mission. On January 10, 1891 (less than two weeks after Blyden's speech on church independence in Lagos) the Church Council of the Native Baptists met. Consistent with their policy of collective action they replied to Newton's letter expressing feelings of brotherly love to the mission church, "but that it is not their desire, neither do they see their way clear to an effectual union of the two organizations."[36]

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34. Baptist Proceedings, 1890, p.35; and 1891, p. 16.
35. Newton to Tupper, Mar. 2, 1891, Roberson Collection.
36. C.F. Roberson, "Historical Sketch of the First Baptist Church, Lagos", Ogbomoso, N.B.H.C.

The reply indicated a hardening attitude. They were no longer stating conditions on which they would return, but simply refusing to consider union on any terms.

After this blunt refusal, Newton made no further direct overtures to the independent church. There were, however, indications that bitterness was lessening. In the next year Newton was occasionally invited to occupy the pulpit in the Native Baptist Church. But as in 1890 when events in the Niger Mission made peace making impossible, so in early 1892 rumours spread that the British were preparing to invade Ijebu Ode and Abeokuta. On top of the bitterness arising out of the treatment of educated Africans on the Niger was this attempt to destroy the independence of two interior kingdoms.

Newton's attitude to the Niger and Ijebu-Ode invasion was opposed to that prevailing among African Baptists. On the Niger question the members of the independent church had long held up the C.M.S. Niger Mission as an example of how a mission in Africa should be operated. They had urged American Baptists to emulate the C.M.S.. After the purge of the Niger Mission, Newton warned the Foreign Mission Board of entrusting the evangelization of Africa to Africans. He used the Niger as an example of the results of this policy. David had believed in the Niger system of Africa evangelized by Africans even though in the end

he may have been disillusioned. Newton had very little hope of saving Africa with "employed natives." He claimed that this policy was in error, "however good the men who are engaged in the employment system." Baptist mission agents he referred to as "workers of low grade on very high salaries." Newton carried out a Brooke-like purge of the mission staff, cutting by half the salaries of the few who remained. He extended his purge to the Yoruba interior while the missionaries of Abeokuta and Oyo were on furlough.[37] His death prevented an explosion when the interior missionaries returned who maintained the old fashioned idea that "... the Natives must do the greater part of the work of spreading the gospel."[38]

When preparations were going forward in Lagos to invade Ijebu-Ode, Newton was strongly in favour of British action. He felt that nothing permanent could be accomplished by missionaries in the interior until this was done. "A sword of steel often goes before the sword of the spirit." The Native Baptists opposed Newton on both his views of an African agency and the interior kingdoms. On one occasion while occupying the independent church pulpit he was "hissed, scoffed at, and almost sworn at" when he expressed

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37. Newton to Willingham, June 15, 1894, Roberson Collection.
38. Smith to Lumbley in F.M.J., Mar. 1893, p. 242 and Mar. 1895, p. 240.

his views.[39]

When in July 1894 Newton and his wife died in the yellow fever epidemic which had caused the death of six C.M.S. missionaries including Bishop and Mrs. Hill, the Foreign Mission Board was unable to find a replacement. Thereafter no Baptist missionary was located in Lagos until 1920. While the Anglicans, by their settlement of 1894 entrenched white control over their Lagos churches, the Baptists surrendered to African leadership in the same year. The Anglicans reaped a major schism in 1901; the Baptists enjoyed a reunion in 1914.

After 1894 the Baptist Mission church of Lagos dealing directly with the Foreign Mission Board, purchased its building from the mission society and secured its independence. Amiable relations developed between the rival Baptist organizations in Lagos. In 1914 the independent Lagos churches returned to fellowship with the mission being then able to negotiate from a position of strength since they had larger membership rolls and financial strength than the mission organization.[40] By 1914 the missionaries saw that they had gained immeasurably by

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39. F.M.J., July 1892, p. 369.

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1914	Members	Contributions	Day School Scholars
Independents	4,552	£1,796	837
Mission	2,001	£ 454	651

From Yoruba Baptist Association Year Book, 1916, p. 160.

having pulled out of Lagos in 1894. It was the pity of it that the mission society did not grasp the implication of this for future policy elsewhere in the Yoruba country. But by 1920 the missionaries who had learned the lessons of 1894 were no longer in the field. A new and youthful crowd of missionaries emerged in Western Nigeria on the crest of a wave of foreign mission enthusiasm in the United States. They had money and new plans which turned out in the end to be plans as old as the missionary movement itself-- the evangelization of Africa under white leadership.

The Native Baptists were an object lesson to Lagos of what Africans united could accomplish. Missionaries had been isolated. African ambitions had been met. This was the not inconsiderable influence which the Baptist revolt of 1888 had upon the events of 1891, and the establishment of the United Native African Church (U.N.A.).

The foundation meeting of the U.N.A. in August 14, 1891 was the anti-climax to a scheme designed to sink foreign denominationalism in a West African church embracing Anglicans, Methodists, and Baptists, first in Lagos followed by a call to Africans from Sierra Leone to the Cameroons to break their mission ties and affiliate. A firm and convincing lead from Lagos might well have produced such a church. Crowther's clergy on the Niger were related to influential people in all the large cities on the coast.

These relationships crossed denominational lines. For example, three principal sufferers on the Niger were related to the Crowther family, who in turn were relatives of the Macaulays. One wing of the Macaulay family were Anglican, the other Methodist. The Macaulays were related to the Lawsons, one of the royal families of Little Popo. The Lawson family was partly Methodist and partly Anglican.

All the main cities of the West Coast from Sierra Leone to the Cameroons were in a state of upheaval. Europeans were on the imperial move; politically, penetrating the African continent, religiously, securing absolute control over the Christian congregations. In the wave of imperialism Germany, France and Britain all began their penetration of the interior-- Germany in Little Popo and the Cameroons; France in Dahomey, Britain in Egba and Ijebu. The Christian communities resented this European advance upon African kingdoms. Even more serious was the effect which it had upon the mission churches in the areas of penetration.

After German occupation of the Cameroons the British Baptists withdrew, handing over the churches to the Basle Missionary Society without the consent of African Baptists. The Baptist churches of the Cameroons resented this barter arrangement between two foreign societies and declared their independence. They then found themselves in long disputes with their new mentors over ownership of property.

Ultimately, much reduced in strength, they appealed to Lagos Native Baptists for assistance.[41] In Little Popo (Togoland)-- a circuit of the Lagos Methodist district -- the new German administration expelled the English superintendent for political reasons, charged the congregation with treasonous activities, and demanded the teaching of German in the schools. The Methodist parent society in England recruited a German, J.F. Muhleder, as superintendent. No African clergyman could be found to work under him and Muhleder was alone at Little Popo.[42]

At Porto Novo (Dahomey)-- another circuit of the Lagos district-- the Methodists opposed French occupation preferring the British as the lesser of two evils. Persecution of the English-speaking Yoruba community followed. Many left for Lagos or cities in the Yoruba states. As long as the African old timer, Rev. T.J. Marshall, who had opened the mission in 1862, remained the worst crisis was averted. Upon his death in 1899 a French Methodist was recruited. Again no African would work under him, and a large secession followed.[43]

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41. W. Hughes, Dark Africa and the Way Out, London, 1892, pp. 31, 71-2. Lagos Weekly Record, Aug. 16, 1902.
42. S.M., Reports of Little Popo Circuit for 1889 and 1892, Roe to Hartley, July 31, and Oct. 18, 1893, W.M.M.S., Lagos, O.P..
43. Joseph Rhodes, "Porto Novo: The Church and its Founder", Work and Workers, 1895, pp. 406-12. S.M., Report of Porto Novo Circuit for 1890; Martin to Findlay, Apr. 2, 1901, Sutcliffe to Findlay, Nov. 28, 1901, W.M.M.S., Lagos, O.P..

In 1891 the British seized Ilaro, part of the Egba kingdom. The Egba chiefs, fearing the divided loyalty of the Christians, accused them of sympathizing with the Lagos government and threatened them with expulsion.[44] In 1892 the British defeated the Yoruba kingdom of Ijebu Ode. The missionaries professed to see this defeat as a prelude to Christian penetration. African Christians accused the missionaries of hypocrisy.

On the narrower religious field the arrogance which accompanied imperial expansion was reflected in growing missionary intolerance of African customs and leadership. The Lambeth Conference of the bishops of the Anglican church resolved against tolerance of polygamy in any form. This set the church firmly on the path to introducing western modes of life before Christianity. The Lambeth pronouncement hardened missionaries against African customs. The result was discontent among those Africans who had hoped that Lambeth would restrain the westernizing tendencies of the missions.

The enforcement of the polygamy rule and the economic depression of the eighties caused a rift between the clergy and laity. The clergy accused the laity of laxity in

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44. Wood to Lang, Jan. 19, 1891 and Wood to Fenn, July 17, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 36, 133, S.M., Abeokuta Report of 1891, W.M.M.S., Lagos, O.P.

supporting the church. The laity accused the clergy of insincerity in their support of monogamy. Among the Anglicans in Lagos, no congregation was satisfied with its clergy. In Abeokuta there was talk of getting rid of the European and Sierra Leonian clergy, and replacing them by Native Egbas less impressed with the sanctity of Lambeth. Among the Methodists, small secessions took place in both Lagos and Abeokuta of those who refused to accept the goals towards which Lambeth was pointing the way.[45]

In Lagos, the Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone, English heads of the church were attempting to strengthen their hold over African organizations which appeared to be taking too much under their authority. In Lagos a schism in the American Baptist mission left the missionary in charge of the property but minus a congregation. In the Gold Coast the Methodist church was in turmoil. The district synod was suspended. In Sierra Leone the Anglican bishop determined to gain wider powers over his clergy found himself in long, drawn out litigation. Five of his pastors were defying him. Anglicans and Methodists combined to belittle and

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45. "Report of the Committee on Polygamy", The Six Lambeth Conference 1867-1920, S.P.C.K., 1929, p. 133. J.H. Willington, "A Bible Class for Polygamists", Wesleyan Notices, 1890, p. 14. S.M. Report of the Lagos Circuit for 1892" and "Religious State of the Churches 1893", W.M.M.S., Lagos, C.P.. Lagos Observer, June 14, 1890. C.M.S. Proceedings 1894-6, p. 64, Harding to Lang, Oct. 11, 1889, and Wood to Baylis, Sept. 20, 1895, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 148 and 161.

humiliate him. His support for Brooke's purge and refusal to employ those clergy expelled from the Niger added to his unpopularity.[46]

The Christians of the West Coast saw all the elements of their local situation in the great drama being played out on the Niger. It appeared as multiple prongs of one large European intrigue to subdue them. The issues were the same from Sierra Leone to the Cameroons. Only on the Niger was the situation so dramatized and so publicized. The depression was pushing European merchants to dislodge their African competitors and forcing stringent economic measures upon the Niger churches. The Lambeth ruling on polygamy was the signal to unleash a wave of intolerance for African customs and a purge of mission churches. European supervision was being tightened over African congregations; by the Basle Society, by Brooke, by Muhleder, and by the Bishop of Sierra Leone. Crowther was the symbolic victim. But everywhere Africans found themselves the victims of a new hardening attitude, an uninformed intolerance, a pushing and grasping for absolute authority. Seldom were Christians so prepared for a convincing lead towards a

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46. Roe to Hartley, Mar. 16, 1895, W.M.M.S., Lagos, O.P.. Bishop Ingham to the Archbishop, Aug.15, 1893, Lambeth, Benson 1, 12d, 1893 For.. Harding to Baylis, Aug. 21, 1896, C.M.S., G3/A2/0, no. 150. C. Fyfe, A History of Sierra Leone, 1962, pp. 509-12.

magnificient assertion of religious independence.

Lagos was the key because of its wealthy Christian class and leaders of interdenominational West Coast renown. Christianity in Lagos had stagnated among the few having some connections with Sierra Leone. Missionaries were unmoved by the spread of Islam and continued their intransigent attitude to African society. They were intolerant of divergent views. They held a monopoly on higher education. Most annoying of all was their ruthless use of excommunication. Upon all this the damning reports of Brooke, Eden and Robinson from the Niger were eroding English confidence in Bishop Crowther and educated Africans. There was evidence that this challenge to African leadership begun on the Niger was spreading to other societies. The year 1891 was the end of one era and the beginning of another more hostile to African advancement. Seldom were great changes so loudly proclaimed.

On December 23, 1890, Blyden arrived in Lagos welcomed by an interdenominational committee. He addressed the people of Lagos at St. Pauls schoolroom on January 2, 1891 on "The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church." He declared that as long as the evangelization of Africa was left in foreign hands and imposed through foreign forms it would never be accomplished. He warned that even the alien church structure evident at present, would

collapse the moment it was not supported by foreign funds.[47] This stirred those nurtured on James Johnson's plans for eventual independence within the existing denominational structures. The Niger purge rendered Johnson's ideas impractical. Blyden's proposals would wipe away foreign denominationalism and unite Africans for the salvation of the continent and against the policies pursued by the missions.

As a result of Blyden's lecture, inter-denominational discussions were arranged among the clergy and laity of all the mission societies. The meetings were convened at St. Pauls parsonage under the chairmanship of Johnson. A resolution was carried instructing Johnson to draw up a constitution and doctrinal statement to be circulated among the clergy and laity for their comments and approval. The Basis of Union was drawn up by James Johnson and Archdeacon Henry Johnson (disconnected and now unemployed as a result of the Niger purge). It was circulated and apparently approved by the first of March. Accordingly upon a signal from James Johnson all the ministers of Lagos agreed to switch pulpits and declare the inauguration of the West African church thereafter reading the Basis of Union. The Lagos Times reported that all Lagos was eagerly awaiting

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47. E.W. Blyden, The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church, London, 1891; Lagos Times, Jan. 3 and Feb. 21, and Mar. 21, 1891; Vernal to Hamilton, Mar. 14, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 101; Newton to Tupper, Mar. 2, 1891, Roberson Collection; Deniga , African Leaders, pp. 3-4.

the proclamation. Johnson never gave the signal.

It is impossible to say why Johnson came to the brink and refused to jump. The West African Church was the best kept secret in Lagos history. For an issue of such importance to the missionaries it was remarkable that no hint of it appeared in mission correspondence. The missionaries were more than usually isolated from their parishioners. Tugwell wrote to the C.M.S. two weeks after Blyden's public lecture on the West African Church, that Blyden had not yet spoken on church matters. Something did leak out to the friends of African leadership in England. R.N. Cust implored Johnson not to approach the Methodist, Baptist or Roman Catholics in the interest of an independent church.[48] Peculiarly enough this was a year after the issue had been shelved in Lagos.

Why did the West African Church scheme collapse? Some said the wealthy laity were unwilling to finance it. This was unlikely since the Lagos churches of all missions were self-supporting. Others said that dogma, rites and ceremonies prevented its acceptance, that some clergy could not forego Anglican recognition. Its doctrinal programme was too broad. The evidence suggests it had already been accepted. It was unlikely that Johnson would become unorthodox in doctrine. Another writer blamed

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48. Tugwell to Lang, Jan. 13, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 13. Cust to the Archbishop, Sept. 27, 1892, and James Johnson to Cust, July 19, 1892, Lambeth, Benson 1, 11g, 1892, For..

Johnson for holding back.[49] Other possibilities appear more plausible. To win universal support Bishop Crowther must give the new church his blessing, and its apostolic succession if it was to be acceptable to many Anglicans. English sources hint that Crowther contemplated schism before his death. African sources-- Johnson being one-- indignantly deny this.[50] The supporters of African leadership in the C.M.S. parent committee may have promised more than they were able to deliver. The struggle over Crowther's successor had not begun. Cust and Whiting may have overestimated their influence in the C.M.S.. Reliance on their English friends might have persuaded Johnson and even Crowther to delay independent action. Furthermore for all the show of unanimity among the clergy it was unlikely that Isaac Oluwole and Nathaniel Johnson would willingly co-operate.

Possibly most important of all was the basically unchristian inspiration behind the West African Church.

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49. Newton to Tupper, Mar. 2, 1891, Roberson Collection; J.K. Coker, The African Church, p. 13, "Life of Bishop Johnson Part II", The Nigerian Pioneer, July 6, 1917; D.A. Hughes, African Hope, Feb. 1921; The African Hope, Oct. 1919; Hughes, The Nigerian Spectator, Aug. 23, 1924; N.A. Winfunke, The Cause of the Establishment of African Churches, Lagos, 1957, p. 4.

50. D.C. Crowther to J.B. Whiting. July 11, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, no. 160. Bishop Crowther to R. Lang, Dec. 1, 1891, and Allen to Wigram, Dec. 22, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A3/O, no. 15 and no. 18; James Johnson to Wigram, Sept. 25, 1891, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 156.

For all its other noble motives it was an effort to spite the English missionaries. It could only be a success if black racism was called to its support. This was contrary to the spirit of African Christianity deeply permeated with the concept of brotherhood in Christ. If Africans denied this brotherhood, had not the foundation been removed from Christianity itself. Nobler feelings prevented Africans from believing that the crisis was entirely caused by English prejudice. They would have been shocked by the almost unanimous racist tone of missionary letters to London. The planners of the West African Church were, like Venn, the product of the nineteenth century who had watched the mission societies struggle against the detractors of the Negro race. Was it possible that these same societies were joining the detractors? Regardless of much of the evidence, most could not believe it. Had they comprehended the momentous change in attitude with which they were dealing, the plans for the West African Church would have been carried through.

When it was certain that the West African Church had been abandoned, one of its eager advocates, W.E. Cole, convened a meeting on August 14, 1891 of nine laymen, who resolved to establish an African church-- the United Native African Church. The founders represented the laity who had lost faith in clerical leadership. Lay leadership

became a pattern to the African Church Movement, in 1891, repeated in 1901-02 and again in 1917.

The U.N.A. was not created as the result of a fight or schism from a particular denomination. It was founded by men of several denominations as a purely African missionary effort. The founders justified their actions around three main arguments; the evangelization of the continent, the cleansing of foreign forms and the amelioration of the race. In order to carry out its purpose the new church must remould Christianity to suit African conditions rather than uproot African society to conform to Christianity. Claiming that no Native church properly so-called had as yet been created, the founders wished to design a church where everything was purely Native. The machinery of working must be Native, the idea of the organization African, a Native ministry trained on the spot, a Native literature and architecture, with the full cleansing of foreign forms and the incidental features of western Christianity. The success of the missionary effort would ultimately command the respect and admiration of the foreign missionary agencies. It would wipe away the disgrace and calumny heaped upon the Africans in the missions-- an answer to the detractors and contemners of the black Christians.[51] The result was

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51. Hughes, African Hope, Feb. 1921; Nigerian Spectator, Aug. 23, 1924; U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 20, 1894 and Aug. 24, 1891, vol. i, pp. 145-6 and 9-13. J.K. Coker, The African Church, 1913, p.13; G.A. Oke, A Short History of

the foundation resolution:

> ... that Africa is to be evangelized and that the foreign agencies at work at the present moment taking into consideration climatic and other influences cannot grasp the situation; resolved that a purely African church be founded for the evangelization and amelioration of our race, to be governed by Africans.[52]

The U.N.A. was a modest effort contrasted with the ambitious scheme just laid to rest. It was not a clarion call to the Christians of Lagos to desert the missions, but a goal set to evangelize the race and command the respect of the foreigners. In two definite ways the U.N.A. rejected the philosophy of building themselves on the ruins of the missions. They refused to accept excommunicated members from other churches. They refused to make their school a race issue, even though promised financial support to do so.[53] They chose the noble course. It was also the weaker. Extending the hand of fellowship did not stem the wave of persecution from the Societies which fiercely resented an indigenous intruder. Without the racial appeal they were unable to muster the strength which would provide the finances necessary for the large task they had set themselves.

By not realizing that the African church would be built upon the discontent in the missions the U.N.A. slipped

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the U.N.A., Part 1, 1891-1903, Lagos, 1918, chapter 1.
52. U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 14, 1891, p.4.
53. U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 21, 1891, Nov. 18, 1892; Nov. 25, 1892; Mar. 22, 1895, Aug. 23, 1895, pp. 7-8, 82-6, 168-9, 178-80.

into becoming another denomination in Lagos rather than an alternative to mission Christianity. The Niger purge, African leadership, Blyden and foreign forms loomed so large in U.N.A. thinking that if failed to realize that other issues were at stake. Later it dropped the matter of comity, but only reluctantly. The whole approach of the U.N.A. was too moderate, lacking fire and dynamism. The Native Baptists could never provide a real alternative for Anglicans and Methodists because for fifteen years (until 1903) they remained far too Baptist and not sufficiently African. The U.N.A. could have provided the alternative had it promoted itself vigorously among Lagos Christians. It could have drawn the majority of the discontented out of the Anglican mission. It might have thus prevented the major schism of 1901-02 and the consequent splintering and denominationalism within the African Church Movement. The U.N.A. chose the path of moderation. Ten years later it was completely overshadowed by the foundation of the militant African Church Organization which set out to provide an alternative church to the missions in every city and town in the Yoruba country.

Although the U.N.A. was the result of the Niger purge and the shabby treatment of Bishop Crowther, in fact, the mission churches came through the crisis without a schism to disturb them. It would be a mistake (and one which Bishop Tugwell made) to think that since the Lagos churches

apparently accepted the settlement of 1894, the crisis was over. The major schism which resulted in the foundation of the African Church Organization in 1901, had its roots in the settlement of 1894, whereby an African diocesan bishop was rejected and assistant bishops created to mask the obviously retrogressive step. Lagos hostility to the settlement of 1894 was specifically directed towards the two men who had deserted the cause of African advancement and accepted positions under the new scheme-- the assistant bishops, Isaac Oluwole and Charles Phillips. Outside of a mass "stay at home" Lagos had little opportunity to show its resentment since it did not come under the jurisdiction of the "settlement." Lagos was still part of the diocese of Sierra Leone rather than of Western Equatorial Africa.

The interior, Abeokuta and Ibadan, heartily welcomed the new assistant bishops. Tugwell therefore placed Bishop Phillips over Ondo, a pagan area where no English missionaries had ever worked. Phillips led a team of black clergy to evangelize Ondo in a similar arrangement to Crowther's in 1864. Bishop Oluwole was to take over Abeokuta, an area of long established Christian congregations. At this point the theory and practice of the C.M.S. broke down. In theory the C.M.S. proposed to place assistant bishops over the larger Christian communities, which were self-supporting, possessed some diocesan organization and well

established schools such as Lagos, Freetown, and Bonny. After a few years of successful operation the area would be created a diocese and the assistant bishop raised to a full and independent bishop. This theory in the circumstances was impractical since in the larger Christian communities the English missionary had firmly entrenched himself and refused to work under a black bishop. Furthermore a large section of Africans opposed this scheme as being designed to postpone independent bishops. Even those willing to try the C.M.S. theory were unwilling to submit to assistant bishops who were appointed, not because they were natural leaders or gifted men, but because they were willing to be pliable instruments in white hands. The Abeokuta English missionaries refused to work under Bishop Oluwole. Since Bonny would not have him and Lagos was in another diocese, Oluwole resided in Lagos and ran errands for Bishop Tugwell.

In 1898 Lagos was transferred to the diocese of Western Equatorial Africa. Oluwole was placed in charge, entrusted with full powers in Tugwell's absence. This put Oluwole in a position where he was sure to fail. He too, could be used as another Crowther to prove the inability of Africans to lead, and the unwillingness of Africans to follow men of their own colour.

Tugwell failed as a bishop in two ways. In the first

place he was first a missionary, then a bishop. He desired to place his assistants in charge of the episcopal work, while he was free to push missionary plans on the Christian frontiers. Granted, his diocese was immense. No one man could handle properly the established Christian communities on the coast, as well as organize the advance into the Ibo country and Northern Nigeria. The missionaries of the interior complained that he was always in Lagos while every crisis in Lagos found him in the far interior. The C.M.S. were prepared to remedy the situation if Tugwell gave them leadership. But he wished to keep all of Nigeria and the Gold Coast under his personal control multiplying assistant bishops as his emissaries. His second failing arose partly out of the first and partly out of his own view of Africans. He never grasped that religious politics were as much a part of African society as of English. In passing through a serious church crisis he never understood the most simple and fundamental facts of local politics. The cavalier manner in which he placed full power in Oluwole's hands in the explosive situation in Lagos and promptly left on a fourteen month tour of the north proved this. Upon returning to Lagos he seemed not to grasp that a bishop's power lay in moral suasion and respect and not in the colour of his skin.[54]

He was not unaware of the subtleties of power in an

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54. Tugwell to the Church Wardens, Mar. 12, 1901, and Mar. 16, 1901, Standard Collection, nos. 12 and 18.

English context. He adroitly quelled doubts in England over his policies. He refused to force the English Abeokuta missionaries to submit to Oluwole's supervision, or move them, upon their threats of "pulling strings" in London.[55] He appeared super-sensitive to issues involving the parent committee of the C.M.S.. His skilful manipulation vetoed all its plans for West Africa without an explosion. But in West Africa he seldom remained long enough in one place to grasp the fundamentals of church life.

Tugwell recognized three problems-- the desire for African supervision in Lagos and the Delta, his own belief that African diocesans would leave the Anglican church, and an old element now returned to the C.M.S. Committee who were determined to create African bishops. In the C.M.S., Wigram and Lang, the architects of the settlement of 1894 to which Tugwell was committed, had been replaced. The rebels, Cust and Whiting, who resigned in protest against that settlement were back and determined to press on with promoting African leadership.

In 1899 the committee persuaded James Johnson to accept the position of assistant bishop over the Niger delta. Tugwell swung behind this proposal since it would bring the Delta under C.M.S. influence. It would quieten those

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55. H. Duncan and Mrs. Wood to Harding, Feb. 20, 1899, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 54.

hostile to the settlement of 1894 and provide Oluwole with solid support in Lagos. It would appease the C.M.S. parent committee.

The price he had to pay was high. Johnson accepted on condition he be allowed to begin a £10,000 endowment fund to support an independent African bishop. The liberals in the C.M.S. Committee favoured the idea. It would destroy the financial argument against a diocesan bishop and provide him with real independence. In their view it was Crowther's financial dependence on the C.M.S. which contributed to his downfall. The endowment scheme was an advance over Crowther's day because the bishop would be free of the C.M.S. and only amenable to his oath of allegiance to Canterbury. The C.M.S. further strengthened Johnson's position by warning Tugwell that it would not continue indefinitely to finance assistant bishops. That was not in the direction they wished to go.[56]

Tugwell was surprised at the energy the endowment scheme let loose on the West Coast. Before Johnson arrived back in Lagos from his consecration he had collected £6,000 from members of all denominations in Freetown and the Gold Coast. Panicky letters poured in to Tugwell and the C.M.S. Committee from English missionaries on the coast. It was obvious that the £10,000 would be subscribed by the time

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56. Correspondence Committee Minutes, Sept. 26, and Oct. 24, 1899, C.M.S., G3/M/no. 64, pp. 109 and 192.

Johnson had passed through Lagos and reached the Delta. The fact that Methodists had subscribed equally with Anglicans revived fears that Johnson was planning to resuscitate the West African Church scheme.[57]

Lagos again, as in 1891, was the crisis city. There was however, a difference between 1891 and 1900. Lagos was no longer united. In the interval Tugwell and Temple Hamlyn (English minister at Christ Church) had worked to popularize the settlement of 1894 with Oluwole as its symbol. Their efforts were directed towards the elite of Lagos--the wealthy merchants, the higher professionals and civil servants. The majority of the elite remained exterior to the Native church worshipping in the white man's church--Christ Church, which did not come under the pastorate--the super organization which embraced all the other Anglican churches of Lagos. It had been Hamlyn's policy at Christ Church to emphasize denominationalism, to inculcate a love of Anglicanism, which had appeared to the missionaries as sadly lacking in 1891. Hamlyn changed procedures towards high Anglican forms in order to differentiate Anglicanism from other denominations, which since they all used the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, were organized on the

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57. Tugwell to Baylis, May 25, 1900; Johnson to Baylis, Feb. 18, 1903; Hamlyn to Baylis, Apr. 21, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 106, 57, 71; Winfunke, Causes of African Churches, p. 6; "Life of James Johnson" Part iv, Nigerian Pioneer, July 20, 1917.

Methodist class system and carried out Baptist-type street meetings and revivals, had a surprising similarity. Hamlyn also stopped the interdenominational week of prayer.[58] It was easy at Christ Church to arouse hostility against James Johnson's doctrine of an indigenized Christianity which would leave the Anglo-Yorubas as uneasy in the church as their English counterparts. They preferred the sophistication of Bishop Oluwole and his society-conscious wife.

In the other churches of Lagos the attitude of the congregation depended upon that adopted by their respective pastors. Nathaniel Johnson, the only minister who openly welcomed the settlement of 1894, became a solid supporter of Bishop Oluwole. St. Johns Aroloya, under his direction was almost as loyal to the establishment as Christ Church. Ebute Ero and St. Peters Faji had less vigorous leadership, inclined to sympathy for Johnson. They would fall to the successful party in the final showdown.

St. Judes Ebute Metta, composed of the Christian refugees of 1867 from Abeokuta and their descendants, were of an independent spirit. Under the leadership of J.S. Williams, a Johnson supporter, they harboured a dislike of the pastorate not only because Oluwole headed it, but

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58. Harding to C.M.S., July 16, 1902; Harding's Memorandum to the Executive Committee, Minutes, Jan. 28- Feb. 3, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 104 and 48; Lagos Standard, Jan. 11, 1911; J.C. Campbell "This, That, and Another", Times of Nigeria, June 27, 1921.

because it was Lagos dominated. St. Judes' on the mainland did not fancy themselves Lagosians.

The most solid hostility to the settlement of 1894 came from Breadfruit parish. St. Pauls' was the heart of Lagos Christianity. It was the largest church, the most wealthy and the most dynamic. It encompassed the entire class system of Lagos from the snobbish Anglo-Yoruba to the illiterate pagan enquirer. Its school, the best in the city, turned out a younger generation inspired by the revivals of the eighties, who were now old enough to command respect. St. Pauls' had for forty years been under the tutelage of the best African pastors-- Henry and James Johnson. In no other church was the settlement of 1894 so fiercely disliked. Johnson's compromise with that settlement by his acceptance of position under it was resented and caricatured as the Anglican Church selling bishoprics at £10,000 apiece.[59]

Six months before Johnson's return, Lagos was aflame. Tugwell as usual was hundreds of miles in the interior, having made no provision for Johnson's residence. The C.M.S. asked the Lagos church governing body-- the Church Committee, if they would allow Bishop Johnson to remain as pastor of St. Pauls until Tugwell could arrange permanent accommodation for him. Bishop Oluwole, influenced

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59. Mojola Agbebi "Inaugural Sermon" Dec. 21, 1902, A.C.(Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901-1908, p. 92; Lagos Standard, Jan. 1, 1902.

the Church Committee to refuse this request.[60] If Oluwole was to secure his position it was important that the immensely popular Johnson returning as a bishop should not long remain in Lagos. Furthermore, the key church of St. Pauls must be provided with a pastor unswervingly loyal to Oluwole who would uproot the core of hostility to the settlement of 1894.[61]

The news of the Church Committee's refusal leaked out to the public. It was surmised that Johnson was again being victimized by church authorities as he had been so often in the past. As English concern grew with the success of the endowment scheme, some in Lagos believed that the English were trying to prevent Johnson from making his appeal for funds. Oluwole was frightened at the prospect of African diocesan bishops. He had not the support or respect to hold an independent position. His power rested upon C.M.S. authority.

The Lagos churches formed a People's Committee which petitioned the Church Committee to reconsider its decision. In an interview Bishop Oluwole showed his hand. He was

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60. Baylis to Lagos Church Committee, Apr. 10, 1900, and Lagos Church Committee to C.M.S., May 29, 1900, Standard Collection, nos. 2 and 3.

61. Lagos Church Committee interview with Breadfruit delegates, Sept. 13, 1900; Phelan to Tugwell, Sept. 23, 1901. Breadfruit petition to Bp. Tugwell, Sept. 27, 1901, Standard Collection, nos. 7, 31, 31A; Harding to Baylis Dec. 27, 1900, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 7; Baylis to Tugwell, Dec. 13, 1901, C.M.S., G3/A2/L8, pp. 39-40.

determined to keep Johnson from returning to St. Pauls. The disaffection began to crystallize around Oluwole. Though warned of possible confusion he came to St. Pauls on Sunday, September 30, 1900 to conduct the service. As he mounted the pulpit during the singing of a hymn, half of the congregation left their seats and walked out of the church. Word flashed through Lagos. During the sermon a number of youths vigorously rang the church bell which, being the firebell signal for Lagos, brought crowds mulling around the church door. The incident embittered the two factions. Oluwole was for the first time since 1894 publicly marked as the object of dislike.

A petition of appeal was sent to Tugwell in the North. Six months after the "bell incident" Tugwell returned to Lagos to answer the petition. During the six months both parties remained hostile. Just prior to Tugwell's arrival, Bishop Johnson arrived in Lagos and returned to St. Pauls parsonage where his family and belongings were located.

Tugwell demanded an apology from St. Pauls' parishioners for the "bell incident" of September 30. Johnson as pastor, secured it for him. Tugwell rejected it. Johnson secured another which cleared the way for negotiations.[62]

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62. Johnson to Breadfruit Parishioners, Oct. 17, 1900; S.E. Savage to Tugwell, Mar. 31, 1901, Standard Collection, nos. 10 and 21; Jones to Baylis, Oct. 27, 1900, Tugwell to Baylis, Mar. 20, 1901, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 149 and 58. J.K. Coker to Tugwell, Mar. 15, 1901, Coker Papers; Lagos Standard, Dec. 11, 1901; J.C. Lucas, The History of St. Pauls 1852-1945, Lagos, 1945, p. 37.

This first act of submission led Tugwell to underestimate the opposition and overestimate Johnson's influence in St. Pauls. Tugwell entered into correspondence with the People's Committee in which he outlined his theory of church government. He said that Bishop Oluwole had been in charge with full powers. If the people refused to accept his authority they were indicating that the assistant bishops could never evolve into diocesans-- an evolution which Tugwell assured them was his greatest desire. The People's Committee emphasized that they desired a voice in church government whether the bishop was black or white. Only in blatant autocracies was there no right of appeal. In England even in endowed benefices, the parishioners had a right to protest. How much more was this necessary in Lagos where pastors were wholly supported by their parishioners! The People's Committee were asking for the substance of a resolution passed by the C.M.S. in London while this correspondence was in progress, that unwanted pastors should not be foisted on unwilling congregations.[63]

Tugwell did not concede this right but he worked out a compromise satisfactory to both sides. He upheld the Church Committee and Bishop Oluwole by asking Johnson to

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63. For the correspondence between Tugwell and the People's Committee culminating in an interview, Mar. 12- Apr. 4, 1901, see Standard Collection, nos. 11-22; Memorandum on the Constitution of Churches in the Mission Field, Revised Mar. 1901, C.M.S., G3/M/no. 65, p. 679.

resign, and then requested the Committee to allow him to decide when the resignation should take effect. He extracted a promise from Johnson that he would not make his appeal for the Endowment Fund in the tense atmosphere then prevailing in Lagos.

Tugwell had won a breathing space through a compromise which kept everything in balance. The missionaries were pacified by stopping the Endowment. Oluwole's authority had been upheld and Johnson was pastor of Breadfruit. But the arrangement which left all the problems unsolved, was temporary. One would have expected that in the few months of respite given him, Tugwell would not only have been fair, but have taken great pains to appear so. In his clumsy handling of the transition which still had to be made, he showed that he had never understood the problem he had temporarily solved. He relied on his own prestige and white skin.

In July 1901, Johnson went to the Delta on an episcopal visit. While he was away Tugwell announced that his resignation had taken effect. Johnson returned and found his family and belongings in the street. He had neither a place of residence nor taken formal leave of his congregation. Immediately the Patronage Board (Bishop Oluwole being one of its three members) nominated Nathaniel Johnson, a close friend of Oluwole, to the vacant incumbency.

It was difficult for the parishioners to believe that Tugwell was not a party to the whole affair.

Breadfruit parishioners were infuriated. The shabby treatment of Johnson was overshadowed by his successor. They petitioned for Rev. S.A. Coker, curate of St. Pauls, and the foremost pastor in the Johnson tradition. Treating the petition with silence the Patronage Board announced six days later, that Nathaniel Johnson had accepted the nomination.

Nathaniel Johnson and Simeon Coker were leading protagonists of opposing views in Lagos. Johnson, the elder and conservative, and a loyal friend of the missionaries and Oluwole, supported the settlement of 1894 as the safest path to an orderly and responsible church. Coker, at thirty nine, was discontented with the premium placed upon age in the pastorate and eloquent in defence of African leadership. Instead of compromising with a clergyman less committed to either viewpoint Tugwell confirmed the nomination "with pleasure." The People's Committee persisted in continuing correspondence over the rights of laity to have a voice in the choice of their pastor. Tugwell refused to reply.[64]

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64. Standard Collection, Aug. 3- Sept. 27, 1901, nos. 23, 31A; Tugwell to Baylis, July 12, and Aug. 9, 1901, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 103, 108; The Lagos Standard, Dec. 4, 1901. Revised Constitution of the African Church, Lagos, 1951, p. 2.

The first crisis had been a threat to the authority of Oluwole. In Tugwell's mind it was caused by the contempt in which Blacks held Black leadership. The second crisis was a threat to his own authority. No compromise was possible. He called in S.A. Coker and accused him of encouraging the petition to secure the pastorship of St. Pauls. Coker resigned. He called on the officers of St. Pauls demanding a written pledge of loyalty to N. Johnson, the new pastor. The officers asked permission to consult the parishioners. Tugwell refused and accepted their collective resignations. He turned down offers of mediation from Bishop Johnson, Christ Church parishioners and the uncommitted clergy of Lagos. He accused Bishop Johnson of fomenting the whole affair for his own selfish ends and ordered him to leave immediately for the Niger delta.[65]

Bishop Johnson preached his farewell on October 13, 1901, the anniversary of the expulsion of the Christians from Abeokuta in 1867. At the same hour eight hundred of the parishioners were holding their first separate service

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65. Standard Collection, nos. 31B- 31D; Yoruba Executive Committee Minutes, Oct. 14, 1901; Tugwell's interview with Johnson, Oct. 15, 1901 (Private); Tugwell to Baylis, Nov. 11, 1901, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 137 and enclosure, 136; J.K. Coker in Lagos Standard, Dec. 4, 1901; J.K. Coker, History, 1941, Coker Papers: A.C.(Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901-1908, pp. 28-9.

nearby on the Marina.[66] D.J.A. Oguntolu was laying the foundation of the African Church Organization with a sermon from the text;

> Look not upon me, because I am black... they made me the keeper of the vineyards; but mine own vineyard have I not kept.[67]

Four days later Tugwell instituted N. Johnson as the new pastor of St. Pauls Breadfruit Church.

Bishop Johnson made one last effort at conciliation. After long hours of bargaining he persuaded J.K. Coker who was now leading the secession, to change his stand. Coker asked for a week's postponement of the installation of N. Johnson to give him time to effect a reconciliation. Johnson confidently approached Tugwell who refused a postponement.

The second service of secession was held the following Sunday. At the close of the service a messenger arrived calling, "Come back, come back, Bishop Johnson is weeping." After a brief pause, a woman remarked that if Christ had turned back at his mother's tears, the salvation of the world would have been lost, and taking up "Onward Christian Soldiers" the secession hardened into schism.[68] Johnson had lost his magic leadership over those whose ideas he

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66. Tugwell to Baylis, Nov. 11, 1901 and Tugwell interview with Johnson, Oct. 15, 1901, (Private) C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 136, 137: J.K. Coker, History, 1941, Coker Papers.
67. Song of Soloman 1:6 quoted in Coker's History.
68. Coker's History; A.C.(Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901-1908, p. 29.

had moulded. He now appeared conservative and committed to the established order. The secession left Johnson inside the Anglican Church without a following, and the secessionists embarking on a historic adventure, leaderless.

The Lagos Standard, owned and edited by a foundation member of the U.N.A., published a special issue devoted to the correspondence and history of the secession.[69] Contributions poured in from all over Lagos. Labour and materials were donated by the community. Within a month a building had been erected. On December 22, 1901, the new building was dedicated and named "Bethel" by J.S. Williams, the Anglican pastor of St. Judes with the words, "this day we lay the foundation of the church for the black race...."[70]

After the institution of N. Johnson while Tugwell left for the interior the seceders continued to agitate until every church of the pastorate was "honeycombed" with them. Conciliators, J.S. Williams acting as one, hoped Bethel would settle down as another Anglican church in Lagos. Conciliation was unwelcome and Oluwole condemned Williams' service to Bethel as traiterous ordering him to confine his activities to St. Judes.

Under Williams' leadership the congregation of St. Judes severed their connection with the pastorate (not the Church

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69. The Lagos Standard, Special Issue, vol. viii, no. 8, Nov. 8, 1901, Referred to as the Standard Collection.
70. Coker's History: A.C. (Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901 - 1908, pp. 30-1.

of England). They claimed that the church land had been given to the Christian refugees from Abeokuta in 1867. The C.M.S. had no claim to it.[71] With Tugwell away, and Oluwole powerless, the Church Committee made no effort to replace Williams at St. Judes.

The C.M.S. delayed a year before deciding to test their rights to the property. They had just emerged the loser from long litigation in Sierra Leone upon a similar issue of removing an unwilling clergyman, which outside of the expense had damaged the image of the church in that colony.

The C.M.S. was ill-informed of the crisis for which the pastorate was requesting permission to go to court. Tugwell was in the interior and the missionaries in Lagos wrote conflicting reports. Hamlyn at Christ Church, blamed the whole affair on Bishop Johnson, criticizing any attempt at conciliation, claiming that firmness was all that Africans understood. Hamlyn took over the organization of resistance to the "Bethelites." Under police protection he went to St. Judes to occupy the church and parsonage for the C.M.S.. On his command the police broke up the

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71. Harding to Baylis, Jan. 10, 1902; Resolution of St. Judes Church, Dec. 29, 1901: St. Judes to Tugwell, Dec. 31, 1901: Oluwole to J.S. Williams, Dec. 26, 1901: Williams to Oluwole, Dec. 28, 1901: St. Judes to C.M.S. G3/A2/O nos. 24, 39 (plus four enclosures), 40: Hamlyn to Fox, Sept. 25, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 146: Lagos Standard, Feb. 19, 1902: J.K. Coker, "The First Five Years of the African Church 1901-1906", typescript, Coker Papers.

service and arrested J.S. Williams in the pulpit for disturbing the peace. In the fray Hamlyn got "roughed up" and the police arrested his assailants. Hamlyn occupied the parsonage for two weeks but after another disturbance the government sealed the buildings, and put a police guard on the property forbiding its use to either party. Williams won his case with damages awarded and the other cases were thrown out of court. Hamlyn continued to write the parent committee of the C.M.S. in hysterical tones claiming the whole Anglican work would collapse if St. Judes property fell to the "Bethelites."[72]

The man to whom the C.M.S. officially looked for advice was their field secretary, Tom Harding. Harding was unsure that the seceders had committed any sin for which foregiveness was impossible. He warned the C.M.S. against legal action believing that when tempers cooled, both Bethel and St. Judes would return to communion. Although he warned the C.M.S. that it had heard only one side of the dispute, he refraimed from saying any more, possibly fearing Tugwell's wrath. He hinted that episcopacy was the cause of it all and condemned the policy of placing the top stone (bishop) into the foundation of

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72. Hamlyn to Baylis, Apr. 21, Aug. 29, Aug. 31, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 71, 139, 140.

the Native church.[73] Whether these veiled gibes were levelled at Tugwell, Oluwole or Johnson, or episcopacy in general, was unclear.

In this confusion the C.M.S. sent Melville Jones, missionary at Oyo, to Lagos to report. At first, he inclined to take Hardings view, but swung around to Hamlyn's and recommended action in the courts. Hamlyn was rewarded by Tugwell first with an Archdeaconship in Lagos, then an assistant bishopric in the Gold Coast converted into full diocesan bishop in 1909. Harding was rapped for his view on episcopacy and relieved of his secretaryship. At his death in 1912 after thirty two years of active service he warranted one line in Stock's four volume history of the C.M.S..[74]

Melville Jones took charge of the court case. Neither of the contending parties held a deed. The decision rested upon oral evidence as to the exact wording of the chiefs

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73. Harding to Baylis, Oct. 30, 1901, Apr. 25 and July 16, 1902, Harding to Gladstone, Nov. 15, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 129, 79, 104, 156: Hamlyn to Baylis, Aug. 29, 1902, Oluwole to Tugwell, Apr. 21, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 139, 77.

74. None of Hamlyn's promotions found favour with the C.M.S.. Baylis to Tugwell, Mar. 25, 1904, C.M.S., G3/A2/L8, p. 204: Baylis to Harding, June 10, 1902 (Personal) C.M.S., Yoruba Letter Book, vol. 8, p. 62: Stock, History, iv, p. 65.

(now deceased) when the land was given. The C.M.S. position deteriorated when the government discovered that the police seals were illegal, hastily removed them and the seceders recommenced services undisturbed.

After numerous meetings between the governor (a relation of Melville Jones), the attorney general and Jones, it was agreed that the government would enlarge its proposed expropriation of land at Ebute Metta to include St. Judes property, after which it would be returned to the C.M.S. with a proper title. The Chief Justice privately objected to the government expropriating land it did not require for public purposes. This objection was circumvented by promising to lease St. Judes to the C.M.S. for 999 years at a peppercorn rent.[75]

The seceders contested the title before the Chief Justice who ruled in favour of the C.M.S.. They appealed before two judges from Lagos and one from the Gold Coast. The Lagos judges ruled in favour of the C.M.S., but the Gold Coast Justice had reservations. The Colonial secretary had said in testimony that the government had not originally intended to expropriate St. Judes property, and only decided to do so after the trouble there. Later recalled

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75. Jones to Gladstone, Nov. 28, 1902: Feb. 7, 1903; Jones to Baylis, Feb. 26 and June 9, 1903; Apr. 20 and May 10, 1904: Hamlyn to Fox, Feb. 25, 1902; Tugwell to Baylis, June 2, 1903; Governor Macgregor to Jones, June 9, 1903; Government Notice of Expropriation, June 16, 1903; C.M.S., G3/A2/0, nos. 166, 38, 55, 99, 76, 81, 100, 110,.

to the witness stand, the Colonial Secretary claimed that he was mistaken in his earlier evidence. The Gold Coast Justice said he would have liked the court to have cleared up what appeared to him to be a serious discrepancy in the Colonial Secretary's evidence.[76] The Bethelites were granted an appeal but the strain on funds was too great and the case failed to come before the Privy Council.

As Hamlyn had predicted, the verdict stopped the defection of Anglicans. The "Bethelites" on their first anniversary turned themselves into a denomination under the name, African Church Organization. By 1905 the new church and the Anglican mission had settled down to mutual hostility.

The crisis, the most severe ever experienced by a mission among the Yorubas lasted two and a half years. It coloured the thinking of Anglican authorities in Nigeria, the C.M.S., and the newly formed African Church. To Tugwell and Archdeacon Hamlyn (later Bishop of the Gold Coast), followed by Archdeacon Melville Jones who succeeded Tugwell as bishop in 1920, the schism of 1900-1903 was the total failure of the policy of advancing Africans to positions of leadership.

This conviction was gradually translated into policy. When Bishop Phillips died in 1906, although there had been

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76. F.M. Jones vs. J.S. Williams, Jan. 25, 1904, High Court Records, Chief Justice's Record Boodk, Oct. 1903- Jan. 1904, Vol. 31, p. 38.

nothing but praise for his work in Ondo, he was not replaced. After the death of Bishop Johnson in 1917 the terms of the trust of his endowment were altered. The money was used for the support of assistant bishops-- a rank perversion of the purpose for which it had been subscribed.[77] When Tugwell retired in 1920, the diocese was three times as large as in 1900. Yet he had only one assistant-- Oluwole and two English Archdeacons.

After the death of Johnson, Oluwole secured his position in the mission church. To the end he remained the white man's friend,[78] blocking all schemes for African advancement. Occasionally the bishops passed pious resolutions about provincial organization or the synod urged action towards African leadership, but there is not a shred of evidence to show that they had any intention of going beyond recording the resolution. By 1920 the settlement of 1894 had become the divine order of things accepted by all alike, English as well as African.

The reformers left the Anglican mission in the schism of 1900-1903. In the following years Anglicans who disliked the mission policy, could and did leave for the African Church whose forms varied ever so slightly from its parent mission. The African Church was a safety valve

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77. Rt. Rev. T.S. Johnson, The Story of a Mission, London, 1953, pp. 123-4.
78. Melville Jones, The Life and Death of Bishop Isaac Oluwole, Lagos, 1932, p. 12.

for the Anglican mission providing a home for thwarted clergy and frustrated laymen. Never before had the Anglican mission appeared so quiet and orderly-- or so dead. It did not produce creative thinkers nor new ideas on indigenization, organization or evangelization. New ideas came from the English who never before enjoyed such unchecked authority and who consequently became more indispensible than they had ever been.

The crisis of 1900-1903 spurred the parent committee of the C.M.S. to action along the lines of Native Church organization. They recommended turning Johnson, Phillips, and Oluwole into diocesan bishops and uniting West Africa in an ecclesiastical province. They tried to persuade Tugwell to give his assistants territorial jurisdiction with salaries drawn from African sources.[79] They paid for a conference of West African bishops to discuss these issues.

The conference was held (1906). A resolution was passed to please the C.M.S..[80] Nothing was done. At the Lambeth Conference (1908) it was Tugwell and Jones who talked of going slow and the dangers of a non-white

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79. Baylis to Tugwell, Oct. 9, Oct. 30, and Nov. 20, 1903, C.M.S., G3/A2/L8, pp. 146,147,149-50, 168-78, Memorandum, Interview Tugwell and Group 111 Committee, Sept. 28, 1908, C.M.S., G3/A2/0, nos. 30, 149.
80. Resolution Adopted by a Conference of Bishops of the Anglican Communion held in Lagos. Mar. 1906. London, 1906.

episcopate.[81] With the diocese of Western Equatorial Africa getting larger, Tugwell could only recommend its division if English bishops headed the new dioceses. Since Oluwole feared the multiplication of English bishops would cause another explosion in Nigeria the plan was dropped.[82] Nevertheless this was the direction in which the diocese was moving. Finally the C.M.S. realized that it did not have the power to create diocesan organization. It could not force Tugwell to move. Since there was no agitation on the part of Africans for these changes the C.M.S. would provoke dissension by forcing them on an unwilling bishop and an apathetic laity.

The crisis of 1900-1903 left a deep division within the church to which it had given birth. The majority of the seceders had been fighting the settlement of 1894 which was derrogatory to the African race. The new organization wholly governed by Africans must be a witness to the promoters of 1894 of the quality of African leadership. It must wipe away the shame of 1894. Ultimately they had to champion the rights of the laity because the government

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81. Melville Jones "Local Churches: Steps Towards Permanent Organization" and Herbert Tugwell, "The Anglican Communion: It's Place in the Christian World" Pan Anglican Congress Proceedings, London, 1908, pp. 195-6, 251.
82. Tugwell to Baylis, Feb. 8, 1906, Apr. 9, 1908, and Oct. 1, 1908, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, nos. 35, 86, 151.

of the pastorate was manipulated in the cause of autocracy. A minority had always been irked by the way the laity had been ignored in the Anglican mission. To them this was the basic cause of the secession. They carried into the African Church an intense dislike of the historic episcopate. To be reform at all, the new organization must renounce government by bishops and enshrine lay rights in its constitution.[83] The diversion in aims plagued the African Church causing division and strife until 1922 and an uneasy compromise thereafter.

The crisis provoked unprecedented denominational bitterness. The Anglicans had ignored the comity-minded U.N.A. but became aware of the threat of the African Church Movement to mission hegemony by the establishment of the new militant organization. The Anglicans lost no opportunity to degrade their unwelcome offspring. The African Church retaliated by dogging the missionaries into every town in the Yoruba country, and building a church across the street from each Anglican mission to proclaim freedom from "the thraldom of the priesthood" and "spiritual policemen."

Even before the crisis had subsided the African Church was confronted with the problem of polygamy, when delegates from an interior Anglican mission offered to join the new organization if they were allowed to keep their wives and

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83. Conference Proceedings of the African Church, Ebute Metta, April 28- May 5, 1907, pp. 32-46.

children. Two factors influenced the church. During the crisis "foreign forms" and indigenous Christianity had not been prominent factors as in 1891 when the U.N.A. was established. The new organization was content with Anglican forms resenting any efforts by their new leaders to tamper with them.[84] On the other hand the founding fathers realized that the African Church required support if it was to carry its heavy financial obligations in Lagos as well as push a vigorous missionary programme in the interior. The crisis had unleashed a wave of enthusiasm, but enthusiasm in competition with mission education would not win support in the interior.

The admittance of polygamists to membership and the communion table had two attractions. There was much literature written by both black and white questioning the morality of preventing converts from partaking of communion because they refused the questionable s tep of expelling their wives and children from the home.[85] There

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84. N.A. Onatolu to J.K. Coker, June 3, 1919, Coker Papers.
85. The Bishops of India, (notably Bishop Milman of Calcutta) were careful to take a broad position on baptism of polygamists. African bishops (with the exception of Colenso) opposed any concessions. Prior to the Lambeth decision of 1888, Bishop Bickersteth of Exeter led liberal opinion in the Church of England. Among others, T.J. Bowen "Should Missionaries Baptize Polygamists". The Christian Index (1858), E.W. Blyden, Christianity, Islam and the Negro Race (1887), T.J. Sawyerr, The Sierra Leone Native Church: Two Papers Read at the Freetown Church Conference (1888), H.A. Caulcrick, Views of Some Native Christians... on... Polygamy (1894).

was the belief that polygamy was a question of social and economic rather than moral issues. Furthermore, the Bible seemed non-commital. Secondly by admitting polygamists the African Church would have the powerful lever it needed to break into the interior. For although Anglican membership in the interior was meagre their catechumen classes were filled with eager enquirers who were denied the sacraments year after year. In no other mission were the sacraments so stressed and valued. The African Church could capitalize on the desire of Anglican catechumens for the sacraments, and entice them away from the mission.

When the decision was taken the majority supported admission of polygamists to membership from necessity, the minority from conviction. The majority called it "toleration", the minority, "acceptance." A substantial number called it "a lowering of moral standards" and returned to the Anglican Church.

The ruling provided an escape for Tugwell and Hamlyn. They explained the schism, in England and Nigeria, as a case of impurity and unwillingness to accept the moral teachings of the Bible. It saved Tugwell from having to answer searching questions at Salisbury Square in London. The explanation that the African Church was set up as a refuge for fornicators and adulterers, implied a moral code

in the missions which could not be upheld.[86] The African Church retaliated by some rather startling exposures of mission members which forced Tugwell to privately admit that:

> As far as the church [Anglican] as a whole is concerned I am more and more satisfied that its condition is deplorably corrupt. It is a question whether those who remained are any better than those who seceded. The latter declare that all are guilty of the same offence and that monogamy does not exist in the church ... I am quite satisfied that the number of those who are living pure lives is very small.[87]

The Anglicans were caught in a web of their own spinning . Should they undertake membership purges and drive out the secretly polygamous in their midst they would simply swell the membership of the African Church. The African Church policy forced a softening of discipline in the Anglican mission. The result was a tacit acceptance of the polygamous member as long as he did not enroll both his wives for church membership or attempt to baptize the second wife's children. Consequently a family of the same father would be brought up part Anglican, part Methodist, and part African Church.

The African Church insisted that the clergy be monogamous and that they uphold monogamy in the pulpit as the ideal marriage particularly for those in modern urban economic circumstances. They refused to put bars before

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86. S.A. Coker, Three Sermons on the Christian Ministry, London 1904, p.29: Hamlyn to Baylis, Apr. 21, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/0, no. 71.
87. Tugwell to Fox, Jan. 9, 1903, C.M.S., G3/A2/0, no. 28.

the communion table which God had not put there. They insisted that it was the duty of polygamous men to present all their wives to the church and bring all their children forward for baptism and Christian instruction. They were quite unwilling to lose the second and third wives and their children to other denominations as the missions continued to do.

Regardless of creeping mission tolerance of polygamy the facade was kept well up. The ever-widening gulf of hatred and recrimination which separated the missions from their African offspring was a direct result of their but slightly diverging policies towards polygamy. The result was three great divisions in Yoruba Christendom-- Roman Catholic, Protestant, and African.

The question of polygamy led to the last great schism. The Wesleyan Methodists, the third of the protestant societies at work among the Yoruba nearly survived the period without schism. Methodist government gave considerable scope for the laity. A Methodist circuit called its ministers. It was impossible for a situation like St. Pauls to develop. There had been occasional friction as the laity pushed towards the adoption of certain Anglican forms but the missionary accepted the argument that the circuit had expressed a clear desire for these changes.

An African Methodist claimed in 1911 that the mission

had escaped schism because it believed in reformation after a fall. Members and ministers found guilty of misdemeaners were not expelled in disgrace, but accepted back upon repentence. Ministers were sometimes retired on half salary or no salary for a year, then re-engaged.[88] Licenses were seldom revoked since this required action by the English synod. Insubordination of an African clergyman to a European missionary might appear a serious offence in Lugard's Nigeria, but was unlikely to move an English synod to action.

The Wesleyan Methodist Missionary Society early in its history, had organized the mission circuits as in England. No other mission organization had the long experience of self-government which the Methodists passed down to the African. There was little record of complaint in the mission over govermental institutions. The Methodist schismatics took over the structure they inherited with no modifications. In no other African church was the transition as smooth or the history of the new church so free from constitutional struggles. The African Methodists found it unnecessary to draft a written constitution until thirty five years after their formation.

In 1908 G.O. Griffin became chairman of the Lagos

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88. "Religious Denominations in Lagos," Lagos Standard, Sept. 6, 1911.

district comprising eight circuits-- two in Lagos, two in Dahomey and Togoland, and four in the Yoruba interior. He undertook a purge which either arose from the unabashed corruption under the former chairman or from Griffin's tendency towards autocracy. Griffin justified it on the basis of the former, his enemies the latter. Unlike the purges carried out on the Niger and in the American Baptist Church, Griffin let the axe fall on members of both races indiscriminantly. In "cleaning up the old regime" he charged the English with dipping into mission funds and sent them packing home. He reversed the usual procedure and placed the financial accounts in African hands. Tagging the English as "holiday missionaries" he accused them of being second rate. He informed the Society that if it had nothing better to send it was best to send no one. He began with a staff of seven. By 1911 he was alone for most of the year. He claimed that the Methodist work had never gone forward so rapidly. He made fluency in Yoruba a prerequisite of promotion for those who stayed with him. He doubled the number of African circuit superintendents and supervised the remaining ones himself.[89]

He was equally thorough with the African clergy. By various means, not always orthodox Methodism, he dropped

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89. Griffin to Brown, Feb. 21, 1910: Griffin to Perkins, Mar. 1, 1911: Griffin to Perkins, Apr. 3, 1912: W.M.M.S., Lagos O.P..

eight African clergy (half of the 1908 total) before 1917. This was a real blessing to the African churches who inherited well-trained men. At the same time Griffin rapidly brought forward new men loyal to himself. By 1917 thirteen of the total staff of eighteen Methodist clergy had been ordained under Griffin. By 1917 the English were again in favour with six of the circuits and the Boys High School under their control. However, it appears only fair to comment that Griffin appeared more colour blind than many missionaries and ruthlessly dealt with either race without favour. His blinding fault was his desire to rule. He placed everything under his personal control. This gained him an ever-widening circle of African enemies within the Lagos circuit. His friends in contrast were devotedly loyal. Methodist work went forward. Domineered by his Anglican wife who was older than himself, and of higher social class, he drove himself on an average of sixteen hours a day. Under her influence, he freely borrowed Anglican forms and techniques.

The Lagos synod finally erupted in revolt. One African clergyman was charged before a minor synod for insubordination to an English missionary. The synod recommended leniency. Griffin appealed over its head to England. Two English missionaries, after they had left on leave, were charged, one for gross immorality, the other for

habitual drunkedness and expropriation of mission funds. They were tried before the synod in England. Without witnesses they escaped the charge, one sent "on to full connexion," and the other to "Didsbury College for further training."[90] A storm arose in Lagos since the African woman accomplice of the missionary was up for disconnection for immorality. In six months an African clergyman was accused of immorality and confessed. The Lagos synod, smarting under being ignored, stubbornly refused to vote his disconnection.[91] One of the disconnected clergy belonged to a family which controlled one of the Lagos newspapers which took up the anti-missionary line and joined the Lagos press in praise of the African churches. This induced Griffin to support the seditious ordinance[92] which was directed against the Lagos press. His circle of enemies widened.

It was remarkable that under such provocation the Methodist clergy did not lead a schism. But in line with all other secessions from the mission churches it was the laity who took the lead. In the Baptists in 1888, M.L. Stone went with the secession but it was obvious

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90. Griffin to Brown, May 10, and June 27, 1910, Griffin to Perkins, Mar. 1, 1911; E.T. Johnson to Brown, July 11, 1910; W.M.M.S., Lagos O.P.. Nigerian Chronicle, Mar. 18, 1910.
91. Griffin to Perkins, Mar. 1, 1911, W.M.M.S., Lagos O.P..
92. Griffin to Brown, May 9, 1910, W.M.M.S., Lagos O.P..

when he returned to the mission that the real leadership lay with the laity. In 1891 not one of the half dozen unemployed clergy joined the newly formed U.N.A..

In 1901 St. Pauls went into schism against the wishes of their leader, Bishop Johnson. S.A. Coker joined after the break was complete. The exception was St. Judes where the parishioners followed their minister into the African Church. This was in marked contrast to the African churches where invariably secessions were led by the clergy.

The missions were hierarchical organizations where the clergy enjoyed positions of power and influence. Yet they were seldom leaders, having gained ordination through willingness to render respect and obedience. Moreover, it was difficult to attain to leadership through becoming advisor in the parishioners' domestic affairs since these were primarily of a polygamous nature. The parishioner could not approach the pastor without revealing his hypocrisy. The minister mindful of mission rules, was reluctant to have the domestic arrangements of the parishioner brought to his official attention. The facade of hypocrisy was a barrier between pastor and people. Disaffections arose among and were led by, the laity.

In the African churches governed by the laity the clergy were more apt to be leaders and given opportunity

to develop leadership. Since the congregation requested ordination, natural leaders were chosen. There was no facade of hypocrisy as a barrier to the clergyman becoming advisor, counselor, and judge in his parish. The clergy submitted to only so much pressure from the hierarchy before turning to the ultimate weapon-- secession.

Many English missionaries were as knowledgeable about the operation of the facade of hyprocrisy as their African clergy. At an Anglican conference on marriage customs in 1902, a layman discussed its operation before the clergy, laity, missionaries, and Bishop Tugwell. At one point he turned to the audience and asked, "Are we not all guilty of this practice?" He received a thunderous affirmative from the audience. He then turned to the bishop and pled with him to, "make us all honest men."[93] This was not a display of African race solidarity, but a striking example of African honesty. While the mission insisted upon monogamy for those seeking membership it maintained the facade over those who went into polygamy once they were members. Occasionally examples were made of men who too openly made polygamous arrangements and by so doing endangered the hypocritical system.

Griffin (sometimes called an Anglo-Yoruba) after twenty

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93. J.K. Coker, "The First Five Years of the African Church 1901-1908," Coker Papers.

years in Western Nigeria certainly knew the situation. Whether he undertook to extend his purge to the laity in 1917 in the interest of a "pure church" or whether the eager new minister, D.H. Loko, was currying favours with his chairman was unclear. Possibly Methodist laymen were becoming less careful to conceal something which they had never been convinced was immoral. The year 1917 was not 1880 when the mission could expect those expelled to return repentent. Now at least four African churches were competing for Mission exiles.

The break was short, clean, and without recrimination. At the Faji circuit leaders meeting on November 25, Rev. D.H. Loko raised the issue of marriage custom and named the ten top men and leaders of Ereko Church. Two days later a crowded meeting of the members of Lagos Methodist churches listened to the indictment read by Loko. The ten admitted their "guilt." Griffin ordered their names removed from membership. Another member from the audience stood and asked why these ten were singled out for censure when many were guilty. On being told that evidence was available only against these ten, fifty-five stood and provided the evidence, whereby their names were removed from the rolls.

The sixty-five began to hold separate class meetings resolving to found a church "ungoverned and uncontrolled

by any foreign missionary body," in which we may "serve God as Africans in spirit and in truth and without hypocrisy." The first regular service has held December 29, the leading layman preaching from the text "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?" The new organization set a modest aim-- "to give autonomy in matters of Methodist policy to a section of its adherents in Nigeria.[94] There were few recriminations from either side. The seceders did not set out to break the parent mission. The mission set forth simply the uncoloured facts.

> There are many polygamists in this organization [African Methodists] who are genuine supporters of the church and apart from their marriage complications are leading upright and God-fearing lives.[95]

Officially the new organization took the name United African Methodist Church. The populous derrogatively nicknamed it Eleja (fish mongers) since the first services were held near the fish market. The U.A.M. cheerfully added Eleja after its name. It provided them with an emblem linked with early Christianity and a motto from the the Bible, "Fishers of Men."

By 1920 the U.A.M. (Eleja) was the smallest of the African churches, and proportionately the wealthiest. It

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94. U.A.M. (Eleja) The Twenty Fifth Annual Report, Lagos 1942, pp. 2-3. The New Constitution of the U.A.M. (Eleja) Organization, Lagos, 1951, preamble. Winfunke, Causes of African Churches, p. 11.
95. Griffin, Methodist Recorder, 1922, quoted in The Twenty Fifth Annual Report, 1942.

had 500 members, expenses of £300 and an income of £1,000.[96] Since it had no clergy the laity ran the classes. The other African churches co-operated to supply a clergyman for the Sunday services. The congregation received communion from the hands of the African Church one Sunday and the U.N.A. the next without any apparent friction or confusion.

The U.A.M.(Eleja) was the only African church founded as a revolt against mission insistence upon monogamy. It made no apology for its attitude believing that polygamy was a matter of a social framework interwoven with a certain type of economic organization. If the economic arrangement changed from one generation to another, (as it had for many families in Lagos) the social framework would change altering the marriage custom with it. It was not a moral problem. European missionaries appeared to base their hostility to polygamy, not on the Bible nor on reason, but on the belief that it implied more sexual activity and was therefore immoral. To the African it did not imply this. But the problems raised by monogamy appeared as highly immoral,-bastardy and illegitimacy with their attendant shame and fear of fathers to acknowledge their sons, brothels which flourished best in the most Christian quarters of the city, and the narrow selfishness displayed by monogamous family units.

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96. Lagos Weekly Record, Oct. 30, 1920.

The mission societies circulated the myth that the cause of the African Church Movement was the desire to practice polygamy, the unwillingness as they put it, to accept the moral standards laid down in the Bible, and a retrogressive reversion to neo-paganism. The vehemence and persistence of mission propaganda was in itself an indication of the unwillingness of the missionaries to face the real causes which they had largely fashioned with their own hands. If polygamy played any part at all it was in the manner in which missions used it. They tolerated concealed polygamy to prevent their demise as a denomination, but exposed it at any moment as a weapon to further their aims, to cover their mistakes, to block African leadership and even to raise funds overseas.

The African churches protested at this misrepresentation of the facts. Yet at the same time they were convinced that their policy towards polygamy had created something of a reformation in Christianity in Nigeria. It brought the church into touch with the society in a way in which all the mission schemes of indigenization failed to do. It broke the weapon of excommunication and forced church practice to conform to that prevailing in England. It freed its converts from that alternating "guilt-protest" mentality of mission adherents. It presented Islam with its first real challenge. It

fostered the growth of a body of critical writing which the missions with all their resources had not the enthusiasm to match.

PART 111

Patterns, Procedures and Policies of Evangelization

> It is the African hope that one day the African Church shall be the national church in Africa.
> G.A. Oke, June, 1919.

By 1922 the African Church Movement had ended its formative period, split, and divided. New denominations (or organizations as they preferred to call themselves) had been established after 1888 at the rate of one every second year until by 1922 seventeen distinct African churches were competing for adherents. Twelve had their origin and headquarters in Lagos. Four resulted from schisms from the foreign missions; six from schism in the African churches; three from the result of the Garrick Braid movement in the Delta; another three were founded in the interior.

The main cause of division centred around the government best suited to an African church, whether hierarchical and controlled by the clergy, or governed by a lay bureaucracy or whether congregational. If congregational, how was local church autonomy to be reconciled with organizational unity? A threefold division in the African Church Organization (1907-09) produced one of each. The A.C. (Bethel) chose a lay bureaucracy, the A.C.(Salem) a clerical

hierarchy and the A.C. (Zion), congregational democracy. In 1903 the W.A.E. established a clerically autocratic organization after a schism from the congregationally controlled U.N.A..[1]

Another cause of disunity was the degree of Africanization desirable. Was the European denomination of its origin to predominate in the new church-- in its hymns, litany, dogmas and ceremonies, or were African airs, prayer patterns and customs to be introduced? Was African leadership enough to create an African church or was it merely the first step? In 1903 the Native Baptists divided over the issue African versus Baptist, Ebenezer emphasizing the Baptist and Araromi the African nature of the church. In 1921 the Ethiopian church was born out of the discontent engendered by a rigid adherence to foreign forms within many of the African churches.[2]

The divergent attitude to polygamy divided the African churches into two hostile groups. On the one side were those who, like the U.N.A. and W.A.E., claimed marriage customs were non-essentials of Christianity and permitted

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1. A.C. (Salem), Conference Report, 1907; A.C.(Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901-08; The Origin of St. Stephens Lagos, 1903, W.A.E. Minute Book. pp. 1-3; Campbell, Origin of the Thirty-six Articles of Faith and the Constitution, Lagos, 1945, p.2; U.N.A. Minutes, Apr. 25, and May 1, 1902, vol. i, pp. 394-98.
2. Native Baptist Church vs. Mojola Agbebi, Suit no. 59 of 1903 in the Supreme Court of the Colony of Lagos; Adeniran, The African Religion, Ibadan, 1927.

polygamy to the clergy and laity. On the other side were the African Church (Bethel and Salem) and U.A.M.(Eleja) which tolerated polygamy among the laity enjoining strict monogamy upon their clergy.

The African Church Movement unleashed the pent up energy of African leadership which found little outlet in colonial civil life. The African churches suffered from too much leadership while the missions complained of too little. Excess of leadership increased division.

There was an awareness of the weakness produced by disunity. As early as 1898 the Native Baptists organized a fellowship which embraced the independent Baptist churches from Sierra Leone to the Cameroons. A similar organization of the W.A.E. linked churches in the Gold Coast, Lagos and the Niger Delta.[3] The Baptist fellowship and W.A.E. communion, like the political organization, the National Congress of British West Africa, linked the inter-colonial cities with common characteristics and problems, rather than the cities with their hinterlands. The African Communion was founded in 1913 to provide fellowship among the four major organizations in Lagos. By fostering inter-communion it assisted in promoting organic unions in the following decades.

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3. S.M. Harden "Mojola Agbebi", Roberson Collection; An Account of Mojola Agbebi's Work in West Africa, Lagos, 1903, Minutes of the Twelth Annual Conference, Jan., 1924, W.A.E. Minute Book.

After 1922, eleven of the organizations carried out eight organic unions. By the 1940's there remained only the four major organizations: the U.N.A., the African Church, the U.A.M.(Eleja), and the W.A.E. Communion. Consolidation was influenced by the unexpected tenacity of the missions in holding their adherents and the rise of the "Aladura" (Prayer) movement which threatened to overwhelm orthodox Christianity.

The first organic union took place in 1914 when the two Native Baptist organizations-- Ebenezer and Araromi-- returned to fellowship with the Baptist Mission. Araromi remained a member of the African Communion for another ten years, but after the death of its founder in 1917, this bridge position became more and more untenable. In 1924 Araromi fell completely under the domination of the mission society and severed its communion connection.[4]

The African Church which had suffered severely from splintering, gradually regathered its scattered branches. The major division between Bethel and Salem was healed by a union in 1922. The Evangelist and Penuel branches rejoined in the 1930's. Two of the organizations which grew out of the Garrick Braid revival in the Niger Delta sought affiliation with organizations in Lagos.

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4. Yoruba Baptist Association, Constitution and Bye Laws, 1914; Baptist Proceedings, 1916; J.K. Coker, The African Communion 1918-1925, A.C. (Salem) Minutes v, p. 240.

Table 1 Major Divisions and Unions 1888-1947

Organization	date	Organizer	Unions
Ebenezer Baptist	1888	The Laity	1914 Yoruba Baptist Convention
Araromi Baptist	1903	M. Agbebi	1914 Yoruba Baptist Convention
African Church(Bethel)	1907	The Laity	1923-1932-1936—African Church
(Salem)	1907	The Clergy	1923-1932-1936—African Church
(Evangelist)	1927	J.K. Coker	1932-1936—African Church
(Penuel)	1917	A.O. Ijaoye	1936—African Church
United African Methodist	1917	The Laity	1936 1947 U.A.M.
Ind. African Methodist	1922	H.T. Scott	1936
Ind. Native African	1927	G.M. Fisher	1947
United Native African	1891	The Laity	U.N.A.
African Congregational	1909	S.A. Coker	1917 Niger Delta Native
Christ Army-			
Niger Delta Native	1916	S.A. Coker	1917 Niger Delta Native
Garrick Braid	1919	Moses Hart	Garrick Braid
Christ Army(G.B.C.)	1917	J.G. Campbell	1919 W.A.E. Communion
West African Episcopal	1903	J.G. Campbell	1919 W.A.E. Communion
Evangelist Band	1920	E.M. Lijadu	Evangelist Band
Church of Christ	1899	T. Adebiyi	Died out
The Ethipian Communion	1921	S.A. Oke	
The Christian Brotherhood	1918	A. Ishola	

Table 11 Christian Adherents Southern Nigeria 1921 [5]

Organizations	West	East	Total
African or Independent Churches	32,583	57,650	90,233
Baptist-(Mission and Independent)	9,204		9,204
Wesleyan Methodist Mission	13,656		13,656
Anglican Mission	86,084	197,541	283,625
Roman Catholic	26,000	125,000	151,000

The African churches as a group in 1921 controlled the second largest following in Western Nigeria with 33,000 adherents, 26,000 of whom belonged to the four major organizations. Added to this were the 29,000 adherents which they held in Eastern Nigeria, plus another 28,000 adherents of Independent Eastern churches. These 90,000 independent churchmen in Southern Nigeria formed the third largest Christian group. The Anglicans had 284,000 and the Roman Catholics, 151,000.

The numerous independent adherents in the Eastern Region were due to the explosion of Christianity which

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5. The statistics used in this chapter are the result of correlation between those given in P.A. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, vol. iv, London, 1926, pp. 120-24 and the statistics of the missions and African churches. For the African Church 1907 in A.C.(Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901-08, and for 1915, 1921, and 1927, A.C. Papers. For the U.N.A. see Lagos Standard, Jan. 25, 1911, and Report of the Twenty Ninth Anniversary, 1920. For the U.A.M. "Second Annual Report", Lagos Weekly Record, Oct. 30, 1920 and Preacher's Books 1921-1930. For the W.A.E., Report of the Third Anniversary, 1906 and Campbell to Pratt and Wulff, Mar. 13, 1920 in W.A.E. Minute Book and The African Hope, Aug. 1919. For the Native Baptist see S.G. Pinnock, The Romance of Missions in Nigeria, Richmond, 1917, p. 160.

Table 111

African and Independent Church Adherents Southern Nigeria.

Western Nigeria	1911-16	1919-21
United Native African (1891)	2,916	10,770
Araromi Baptist (1903)	640	1,422
West African Episcopal (1903)	352 (1906)	5,000
African Church (Bethel) 1907	2,555	9,549
(Salem) 1907	1,843	
African Church (Penuel) 1917		2,100
United African Methodist 1917		1,055
Evangelist Band 1920		2,687
Total (Western Nigeria)	10,776	32,583
Eastern Nigeria		
Affiliates of African churches of Lagos		29,225
Indigenous Eastern churches		28,435
Total (Eastern Nigeria)		57,650
Total (Southern Nigeria)		90,233

occurred in the Niger Delta under the inspiration of the Evangelist, Garrick Braid, and the severity in the application of the comity agreements. Calabar was an example. Under the comity arrangements, Calabar was the exclusive preserve of the Presbyterians. Sizeable colonies of Methodist and Anglican were faced with Presbyterian worship or nothing. Unrest, as a result of the dislike of the dictatorial methods of the mission, was greater in Calabar than anywhere else in Nigeria. It was an ideal setting and opportunity for the African churches who, protected in a sense by the mission comity agreements, had the field to

themselves and exploited the unrest with good results.[6]

Among the Yoruba, Christianity spread at different rates and in a variety of directions, being rejected in Oyo, grudgingly and partially accepted in Abeokuta, welcomed in Ijebu and eagerly sought after in Ilesha and parts of Ondo. How much of the response was due to the mission policy or to African Church activity? What part did Islam play? How much was due to the nature of the society and the political and economic changes taking place in the various Yoruba kingdoms?

The railway line running from Lagos to the Northern Region divided the Yoruba country into two unequal parts. To the west of the railway, the missionaries had been at work in the cities of Lagos, Abeokuta, Ibadan, Oyo and Ogbomoso since the early 1850's. Conversion had been slow and results meagre-- 90,000 Christians by 1921. To the east of the railway where work began fifty years later, a succession of spiritual movements had produced a conversion rate four times greater than in the west and a Christian population by 1921 of 105,000.

Table IV attempts to correlate the concentration of mission personnel,[7] both European and African, with the Christian and Muslim adherents of the two areas. It shows

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6. Griffin to Goudie, Aug. 1, 1918, W.M.M.S. (Ibadan) 1/4/6.
7. The Proceedings of the Mission Societies give the location each year of all missionaries.

that the mission agents were west of the line and the spiritual movements east. Disregarding the slow rate of conversion, all the societies continued to concentrate their staff in the west. Where the Europeans were, the largest amount of money was spent and the largest African staff employed. By 1919 there were seventy-five qualified agents in the west to thirty-five in the east. The full-staffed west was supervised by Europeans while the neglected east developed under African leadership.

This disparity had developed because of the missionaries unwillingness to move from the comforts provided by the railway and the financial inability of the societies to provide European amenities outside of the earlier developed centres. In addition, missionaries were disinclined to work under African leadership. The societies lacked a policy for handling spiritual movements at unexpected times and in inconvenient places. They depended upon the theory that spiritual forces could be organized and even induced. Their theories were built on the premise that if sufficient agents were employed, money expended, and schools opened, paganism would finally yield. This was how the converts in the west had been gained. But it was a slow process depending on the youths graduated from the schools. The tragedy of immobility was exposed at its worst by a spiritual movement in the Ekite highlands which passed

Table 1V Concentration of Mission Personnel in the Yoruba Country 1900-1920.

	1901-03.	1909-11.	1917-19	.. Christian and Muslim Adherents			
West of Railway				Protestant.	R.C. ..	Muslim .	Ratio Christian: Muslim
Ibadan-Oyo-Ogbomoso	15 5	17 9	17 13	23,000	1,000	106,000	1:4
Lagos and Colony	6 12	7 17	10 15	43,000	9,000	90,000	1:2
Egba Kingdom	7 9	6 15	4 15	24,000	2,000	67,000	1:3
Totals	28 26	30 41	31 44	90,000	12,000	263,000	1:3
East of Railway							
Ilesha-Ife-Oshogbo	2 2	2 3	2 5	23,000	2,000	30,000	1:1
Ondo Central	4	2 2	3 6				
Ondo South (Ikale)				43,000	1,000	16,000	3:1
Ekiti Highlands	1	3	2 3				
Ijebu Kingdom	1 5	1 10	2 13	39,000	4,000	54,000	1:1
Totals	3 12	5 18	8 27	105,000	7,000	100,000	1:1

its climax in the absence of mission agents.[8] Islam reaped a fine reward.

Islam spread in an inverse ratio to Christianity. Missionaries regarded Muslims as worse than pagans since they were seldom potential Christians. Refusing to explore the advantages of Islam they believed its success was due to the low moral standard (with specific reference to polygamy) which it tolerated. Secular writers like E.D. Morel and clergy such as J.F. Schon, T.J. Bowen and Cannon Isaac Taylor, along with Blyden were prepared to admit its potency-- especially its commendable adaptation to African life. A few admitted its moral system was different but equal to that offered by Christianity. Others patronizingly felt it was lower, but the highest to which Africans could aspire.[9] Within the missions the voices of scorn remained preponderant.

The African Church attitude was a synthesis bolstered by a unique contribution. Mojola Agbebi and J.K. Coker believed like the missionaries, that Yoruba conversion

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8. Working Plan of the Yoruba Mission, July, 1910; Jones to Luggard, Feb. 14, 1913, C.M.S., G3/A2/0, nos. 118,80; Griffin to Perkins Oct. 23, 1911, W.M.M.S., Lagos O.P..
9. Stock, II, pp. 103, 449; III, pp. 118, 345-8; IV, pp. 41-3; Lagos Weekly Record, Dec. 3, 1892; African Times, Oct. 22, 1864; W.T. Balmer "The Position of the Negro in the Methodist Church", and W.J. Platt, "Islam in Dahomey" in the Foreign Field, 1911-12, pp. 287-92, and 1917-18, p. 124; G.W. Carpenter, "The Role of Christianity and Islam in Contemporary Africa" in C. Grove Haines (ed) Africa Today, Baltimore, 1955, pp. 94-7.

to Islam was a tragedy, but like Blyden, they were impressed with its adaptability. They sought to emulate its methods.[10] They believed that the Yorubas could be as effective in proselytizing for Christ as for Mohammed if the apostolic method used by Muslims replaced the society method.

The African Church was disturbed by the lowering of moral standards among converts to Islam and Christianity. One of the attractions, especially for the youth who fretted under the multiple restraints of paganism, was the greater moral freedom which the new religions offered. The older and more conservative turned to Islam as the less disruptive, and the most likely to uphold the familiar moral structure. The African Church sought to replace Islam as the preserver of the traditional structure of which polygamy formed the core. Agbebi and Coker believed that where missionary work had been intense and European supervision effective, there Islam developed the fastest. West of the railway where

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10. Agbebi? "Our Islamic Prospects", Lagos Weekly Record, Aug. 26, 1893; Agbebi, "The West African Problem" in G. Spiller (compiler), Papers on Inter-Race Relations, pp. 347-8; Agbebi in The Lagos Standard, Apr. 16, 1902; J.K. Coker, The African Church, pp. 7-9; J. Sorinolu to J.K. Coker, Aug. 16, 1905 and Ijaiye Young Men (abroad) to J.K. Coker, June 4, 1919, Coker Papers; S.A. Coker, Yoruba News, June 22 and 29, 1924; For the spread of Islam, see Southern Nigeria Civil Service List, London, 1909, pp. 38, 57, 73-4, 106, 109; For a modern attitude resembling that of the African churches, see J.S. Trimingham, The Christian Church and Islam in West Africa, London, 1955, pp. 10-11, 17, 22-3, 31-3, and Islam in West Africa, London, 1953, (Confidential-- not for general circulation) pp. 21-3.

Europeans had been hardest at work for the longest period, Islam had advanced four times as fast as Christianity in Ibadan-Oyo, and three times as fast in Egba. Even in Lagos where Sierra Leonians gave Christianity an initial advantage, Islam had twice as many followers. European supervision meant strict discipline which kept the majority outside the church, prolonged the spiritual vacuum and created Muslims. African supervision even in the missions was more lax, brought more people into the church and forestalled Islam. This laxness which discredited African supervision in European eyes, was its justification in the minds of African churchmen. It was being in touch with reality.

Table V. African Churches in Relation to the Railroad 1920

Organizations	West of Railway	East of Rlwy.
African Church	4,660 (400 in Illaro)	4,893
United Native African	2,330	7,950
West African Episcopal	1,000	4,000
Araromi Baptist	600	800
Evangelist Band		2,687
African Church (Penuel)	2,000 (Ilaro)	
United African Methodist (Eleja)	1,055	
Totals-	11,745	20,320
	(2,500 in Ilaro)	

The statistics in Table V show that the African churches were even less successful than the missions west of the railroad. The African churches turned away from

the ideas of Agbebi and Coker. In the west they concentrated upon the three generations of apprentices, as Coker called them, the overtaught and exiles of the missions.

In the east, the African churches played a full part. New converts from the moment of their disillusionment with paganism (the critical stage) were offered a choice of organizations competing for their adherence. The enthusiasm and fervour of the converts carried Christianity in all directions. Groups were brought into the church. The traditional authorities were swept along and involved in Christian politics in a way those in the west had never been. The fervour and excitement produced unfortunate denominational quarrels. Christianity spread, possibly stronger in quantity than in quality, but Coker queried whether Christ judged in terms of literacy, organization and financial support. He concluded it was unlikely.[11]

The rapid spread of Christianity east of the railway line intensified the ideological struggle within the African churches. Denominational loyalties were undeveloped. Converts shifted easily from one to the other-- as easily out of the African churches into the missions as the reverse which had become standard procedure in the west. The lapses into the missions shook to their foundations many of the dearly held theories of evangelization of African

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11. J.K. Coker to O. Taylor, June 30, 1927, Coker Papers.

churchmen. The utility of Anglican forms in the African churches supposed to smooth the path for the mission exiles to transfer their loyalty, was now working in reverse. It was easy for the African Church converts to go over to the C.M.S.. There arose the complaints that the attractiveness of foreign marriage customs were causing serious defections to the missions-- a stunning revelation to those who had pinned the hopes of the African Church to polygamy.[12]

African leadership of both the mission and African Church variety proved extraordinarily effective. The Anglican Mission to the Ijebu Kingdom was one of the most brilliantly organized. Begun in 1892 immediately after the British conquest, the Ijebu mission was entirely the work of Anglican Africans. Financed by the Lagos churches, organized by an African superintendent leading an all-Black staff and under an assistant African Bishop, himself an Ijebu, the spiritual movement which began around 1898 had by 1910 numerically and financially surpassed all the other Anglican Yoruba churches. None of the other mission societies or African churches shared this achievement. The White Methodist staff gained small results, the African Church was rendered impotent by internal dissension and the U.N.A. was occupied elsewhere. In addition to the

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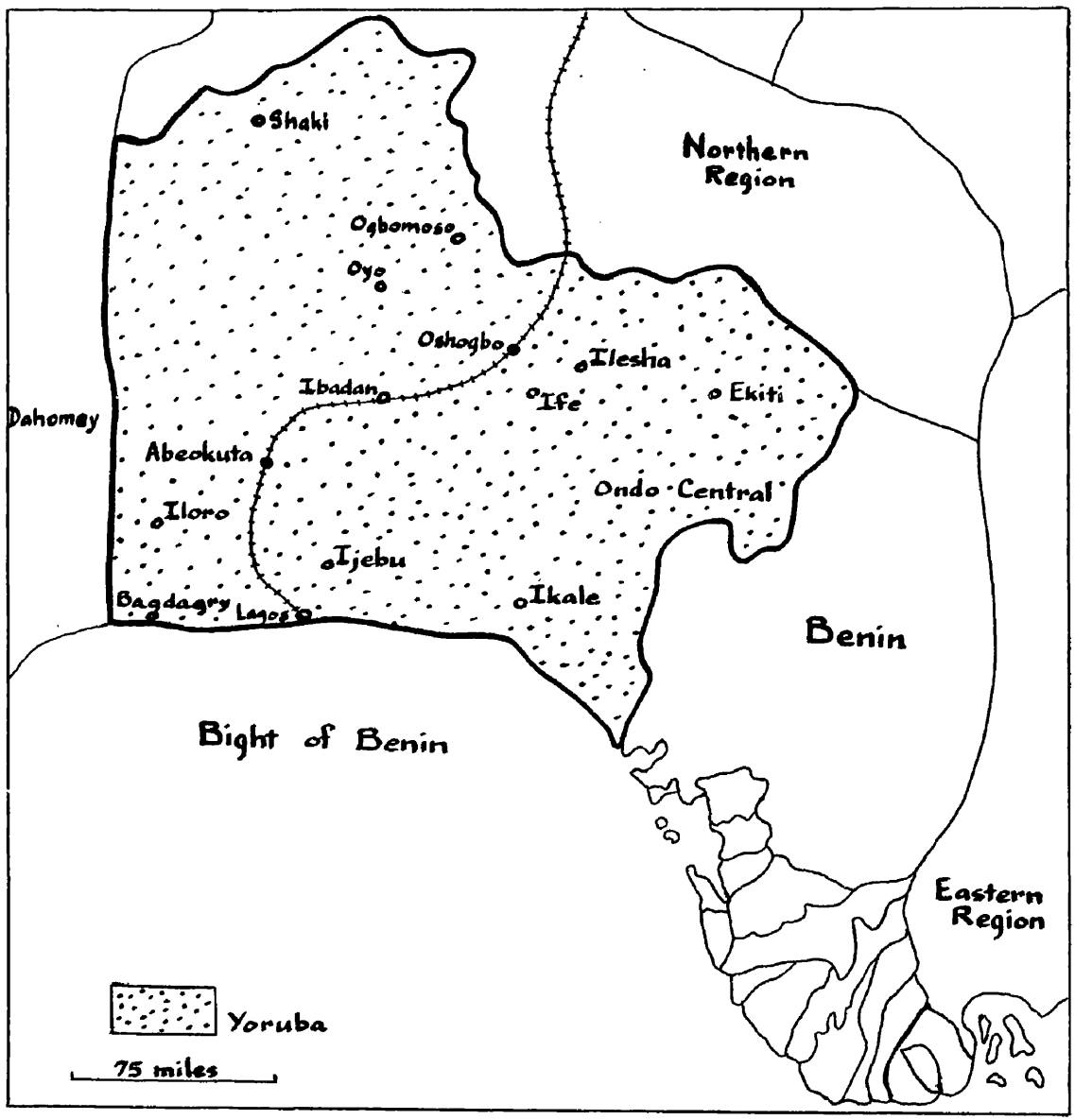
12. D.A. Hughes, Ijo Report, U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 29, 1912, 11, pp. 20-22; A.C. (Salem) Minutes, Apr. 8, and May 13, 1918, 1V, pp. 118-122.

African staff, Anglican success was due to its emphasis upon education which suited the materialistic ambitions of Ijebu society. Furthermore, Anglicanism was considered the true religion of the conquerors and as such, more desirable than Methodism. Initially the African Church had gained a following, but the disputes and divisions

Christian Centres Among the Yoruba in Western Nigeria



which distressed that organization disgusted the Ijebus who accused the Lagosians of impotence except under White leadership.[13] The Ijebu mission in addition escaped the depressing influence of the denigrating reports which missionaries were prone to publish in their periodicals. The reports often became the convert's first contact upon becoming literate with missionary thinking. The following was hardly calculated to inspire confidence in the White messengers of Christ.

> For dense darkness, stupid ignorance, deep-seated hypocrisy, unhesitating falsehood, shallow courtesy, double-mindedness, adept duplicity, to say nothing of the grosser vices, the Ijebu cannot be surpassed.[14]

A similar spiritual movement occurred at the same time in Ikale district of Southern Ondo. Ignored by the mission societies it became the responsibility of three African churches-- the U.N.A., the W.A.E., and the Evangelist Band (an African church of Ondo origin). Through the fortunate conversion of S. Ogunmokomi in Lagos in 1892, the U.N.A. was the pioneer organization in Ikale. A remarkable leader and devout Christian, Ogunmokomi upon returning to his home organized the spiritual movement bringing 8,000 adherents into the U.N.A.. He was deaconed

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13. Reports of the W.M.M.S., 1892,1894,1895,1900,1901; C.M.S. Proceedings, 1900-01, 1904-09; For the A.C., see J.J.S. Nicol to J.K. Coker, Mar. 7, 1907, Coker Papers; Lagos Standard, Sept. 2, 1903. The Anglicans were agreeably surprised at the African Church failure. Tugwell to Baylis, May 14, 1902, and Oluwole to Tugwell, Apr. 21, 1902, C.M.S., G3/A2/0, nos. 75,77.
14. J.B. Lowther, Ijebu Report for 1900, W.M.M.S., Synod Minutes.

by the church in 1904. His full licence was delayed for fifteen years because of the U.N.A. timidity to break with tradition and priest a man not literate in English. The mass of converts were dependent upon a hundred and fifty lay readers. With no resident priest the sacrament had to wait for the visits of the superintendent from Lagos. The pitiful condition caused by the influenza epidemic following the war when converts were dying without the sacraments or Christian burial forced the U.N.A. to take drastic action by giving special licence to lay readers. In 1921 Ogunmokomi was priested and made superintendent of the district.[15]

The U.N.A. Ikale mission observed in isolation was a remarkable achievement, and it may be unfair to compare it to Ijebu, one of the most successful mission enterprises. But since they occurred simultaneously and were organized by Africans dealing with a similar spiritual movement, the comparison is hard to avoid. Differences may lie in the nature of the two peoples, the Ikale and the Ijebu, and certainly the Lagos Anglicans were financially and otherwise better equipped than the few U.N.A. members of Lagos for

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15. G.A. Oke, Life Sketch of Solomon Ogunmokomi, 1930, Oke Collection; Lagos Standard, Mar. 11, 1903; Oke, History of U.N.A. 1904-24, p. 58; Among numerous reports on Ikale the following of particular note. U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 26, 1907; Apr. 9, 1909; July 2, 1910; Mar. 29, 1912, Mar. 3, 1919; i, pp. 444-46, 498-99, 524-6; ii, pp. 20-2, 234-7; Report of the Twenty Ninth Anniversary, 1920.

a missionary programme of such gigantic proportions. The U.N.A. was weakened by the decentralization of its government whereby each local church from its inception became self-governing and self-supporting. This prevented direction from the top and the channeling of the organization's finances behind the Ikale mission. Even a little money would have gone a long way as the Ijebu mission showed.

When all this had been recorded, judged by their own criteria, and certainly in comparison with Ijebu, the U.N.A. failed in Ikale. Mention has been made of the U.N.A. fear to embark on a bold policy of ordination. Youthful recruits from the secondary schools of Lagos were preferred for the ministry to the unlettered elders of Ikale. Denial of the sacraments could not have been greater under a mission society. Six priests ministered to 2,000 adherents west of the railway while one attended to 8,000 in Ikale. The alternative to ordination of the unlettered was education, but it was not provided. The method employed by some other African churches of billeting youths with members to be trained in the educational institutions of Lagos was not attempted. The U.N.A. discovered that when the mission societies entered Ikale, the attraction of foreign marriage and mission education were twin allurements capable of depleting their membership.[16]

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16. Hughes, Ijo Report, U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 29, 1919, ii, pp. 20-2.

The Evangelist Band was begun in Ondo in 1901 by E.M. Lijadu, a priest in Anglican orders. Until 1920 it operated in association with the Anglican Church, the C.M.S. training its agents. Entirely self-supporting from the beginning, the Band developed some rather remarkable indigenization in organization and methods under its able promoter. Important men in the C.M.S. supported Lijadu, believing he was developing a unique and worthy missionary method. Upon the death of Lijadu's most ardent missionary supporter, pressure was brought to bear upon the Band by those who had always resented its independence, to bring it under more direct C.M.S. control. In 1920 the Anglican bishop refused to ordain candidates graduated from the C.M.S. training institutions unless the Band placed all its property under C.M.S. trusteeship. Suspicion developed on both sides until Lijadu broke his affiliation with the Anglican Church.[17] The Band claimed its main support from Ode Ondo, south to the Ikale country. Protracted litigation with the C.M.S. retarded and hindered its growth and prevented it from devoting its energy to the work in Ikale.

In Ondo Central, Bishop Phillips and an African staff opened work for the C.M.S. in 1894. Like Crowther, Phillips worked in association with the traditional authorities.

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17. Ondo and Ilesha District Papers relating to Development of churches and schools 1907-23, C.M.S.(Ibadan) Y 2/2/11.

Even after Phillips' death, African churches were discouraged from promoting in Ondo. The secular authorities continued to show preference for "those of Bishop Phillips' persuasion."[18] After Phillips' death in 1906, the leadership of the mission passed to one of the senior pastors. Rapid conversion began in 1911 and though slower to react than Ijebu, Ondo moved rapidly and steadily to become the most Christian of all the Yoruba areas. Conversion to Islam was negligible.

In the Ilesha-Ife-Oshogbo area, the three societies: C.M.S., Methodist, and Baptist were at work by 1900. Rapid conversions began around 1910. The African Church came to the area through the influence of the labourers from the Agege plantations who had returned to their homes bringing cocoa culture and Christianity. They persuaded their chiefs (Oyan and Ikirun) to invite the African Church. These towns became African Church strongholds. Taking advantage of local secessions from the C.M.S. the church spread to Ilesha and Oshogbo.

As in Oyan, the traditional rulers were from the first, involved with the Christians. In 1891, a Christian king was installed in Ilesha. He invited the Methodist and his court actively supported their work. In 1904 the Oni invited the African Church to build a church in Ife in order

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18. G.M. Fisher to J.K. Coker, Feb. 19, 1914, Coker Papers.

to chastise the C.M.S. who had become intractable. The secular authorities assisted in the building of the new church and lent their official patronage by attending the dedication of the first ediface in 1906.[19]

The secessions were not all towards the African Church. In 1918-19 there were lapses back into the missions in both Oshogbo and Ilesha. The healthy competition pushed all denominations to their utmost efforts. When the heavy flow of converts began after 1920, the stiff competition relaxed discipline and swept many into Christianity who in the circumstances prevailing in areas west of the railroad would have turned to Islam. Success in this area was a major victory for Christianity since all the towns lie on the main north-south trade routes under circumstances in which Islam was believed to have particular advantages.

The African churches preferred to refer to their methods of expansion as evangelism rather than missionary. Mission societies and their employees-- the missionaries-- represented the professional and indicated a lack of spontaneous enthusiasm for the conversion of the non-christian. They created missions (or half-churches) in which the secondary motives of conversion-- education, position, ambition-- appeared more predominant than spiritual forces. The

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19. Work and Workers, 1903, p. 338; Coker's History, Coker, "The First Five Years of the African Church 1901-1906", Coker Papers; C.M.S. Proceedings 1904-05, 1905-06.

societies assumed the pose of being more preoccupied with keeping the converts out when they threatened to overwhelm established order by their numerical strength than they were in sweeping them in. Fear-- the fear of losing control and the fear of the church changing its character from the image in which it was conceived by the missionaries-- was a deterent to methods not proven safe by long usage.

In 1925 a group of laymen within the African Church were convinced that the organization was not sufficiently alive to its evangelistic responsibilities. They organized an African Church Evangelistic Society as a branch of the organization patterned upon the example of the C.M.S.-- the missionary arm of the Anglican Church. Evangelism took precedence over church order (again like the C.M.S.) and the Society came into conflict with the hierarchy of the church. A period of estrangement followed when many bishops refused to ordain candidates to holy orders, recommended by the Society. For a short while the Society operated as a separate organization.

This copying of foreign forms-- a reversion to missionary methods-- did not work well. In 1932 the Evangelistic Society was reabsorbed into the main body of the church.[20] Evangelism was too urgent, too vital and central to the life of the church for it to be delegated to a society. It

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20. A quantity of material on the A.C.E.S. in the Coker Papers.

was based on a presumption difficult to maintain that the hierarchy was unconcerned with evangelism.

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Evangelism was the main preoccupation of the African churches. Every individual member, lay or clergy, was an evangelist. He was unpaid. There were no missions. From the moment a few individuals came together to worship, a church emerged self-governing and self-supporting. Other churches or the organization might assist, but this implied no obligation on the part of the receivers nor conferred any privilege upon the donors. Evangelistic methods were rarely discussed since this implied an organization of spiritual forces. They were little concerned of the corporate body of the church. The problem was how to keep up to the expansion and how to meet the demands for the sacraments and teachers.

It was not unusual for an African Church to begin in a city from secessions from the missions. The seceders approached the African Church resembling the mission from which they had come. Methodists called upon the U.N.A. or U.A.M.(Eleja). C.M.S. seceders wrote or sent delegations to the African Church (Bethel or Salem).

Requests from far away were turned down-- from Liberia

1901, from C.M.S. members in Opobo 1898, and Afikpo 1913, and from Methodists in Klein Popo and Sekondi 1909. Those closer to Lagos were accepted. The U.N.A. began in Abeokuta in 1893, in Porto Novo 1901, and in Kano 1920 by organizing seceders from the missions. The African Church similarly began in Odopotu 1902, Ife 1904, and Warri 1912. More rarely the secessions were from one African church to another. In 1903 Ikorodu U.N.A. joined the W.A.E. and then in 1916 returned to the U.N.A.. In Buguma, the Araromi Baptists called upon the A.C. (Bethel) when they refused to follow Araromi organization back into fellowship with the Baptist Mission Society in 1914.[21]

The lack of agents and the working of the mission comity agreements worked to the advantage of the African churches. Under the comity arrangements the mission society which began operation first, held a monopoly. A priest living in a centrally located city claimed (on the strength of a shed for worship and an annual visit) a monopoly of

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21. Oke, "Important Events in History of U.N.A. 1891-1915", Oke Collection; U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 28, 1901 and July 30, 1921, i, p. 384 and ii, pp. 320-23; A.C.(Bethel), Conference Proceedings 1901-08, pp. 67-70; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Sept. 3, 1912, ii, pp. 125-8; W.A.E. Minutes, Jan. 2, 1904; U.N.A. Minutes, Jan. 14, 1916, ii, pp. 121-7; Delta Baptist Mission (Buguma) to Agbebi, Dec. 3, 1913 and Agbebi to J.K. Coker, Jan. 19, 1914, Coker Papers, W.A. Amakiri, "The Spread of the Gospel Message to Okaki and Other Places" and Amakiri to Roberson, June, 1955, Roberson Collection.

a number of surrounding villages.

The villages resented this neglect. The minimum conditions they demanded was a resident teacher-catechist, a church building with iron roof and bell, and monthly sacraments by a visiting priest. They were not met. Many villages remained unvisited for years, helpless under the comity agreements. The sacraments were highly valued yet most Christians were denied them. When this was pointed out to the C.M.S., the bishop questioned the value of too frequent communion for primitive peoples.[22]

The African churches eagerly accepted invitations from the villages. Once they began services, the mission defended its prior claim by the rules of comity which the African churches had never been asked to sign. Colonial officers, in the interest of tranquility preferred to uphold the comity arrangements if at all possible.

A typical case arose in Idoanni, a town near Owo. The C.M.S. arrived first. After a period of neglect, the African Church (Salem) took up work and by the time the C.M.S. asked the government officer to uphold the comity agreements, the African Church was the larger. The Resident asked the African Church to withdraw since the town was too small for two denominations. The African Church pointed out that it

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22. Bengt Sundkler, The Christian Ministry in Africa, Uppsala, 1960, p. 70. For similar Methodist attitudes see W. Goudie, "Progress in West Africa", Foreign Fields, 1915-16, p. 46.

was neither bound by comity nor could be, since it would exist where Africans existed. African Church land was not vested in an authority outside the village like mission property, but in the local Christian community. Since comity was enforced through the denial of land to a second mission society, the African Church could not be compelled to abandon Idoanni.[23] The Resident respected the logic of the argument.

Occasionally as at Ode Ondo, where the chiefs held a strong preference for Bishop Phillips' church, the District officer requested the African Church to delay its entrance temporarily to prevent open strife.[24] The African Church (although built on private property) complied with the government's request. This compliance was possible because generally the government officers remained impartial and the African Church came to rely on them as judicious arbiters.

Comity agreements had been designed by the missions with the best intentions, to prevent hostility and strife between denominations which weaken the unity of Christianity in pagan eyes. It seems unlikely that interdenominational strife did have this effect.[25] It was more plausible that comity agreements were partly at least caused by the

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23. A.C. Members of Idoanni to J.K. Coker, Sept. 1, 1918; Coker to A.D.O. (Pategi), Apr. 1, 1921; Coker to------, n.d., Coker Papers, Another example "Report of a Missionary Tour to Idimu", June, 1907, W.A.E. Minute Book.
24. D.O. (Ondo) to Coker and Lakeru, Feb. 22, 1915, Coker Papers.
25. Trimingham, Islam in West Africa, p. 32.

sensitivity of the missions to their European critics who enjoyed poking fun at the quarrels of new converts over denominational issues which in their patronizing frame of mind they felt were far too sophisticated for the African to comprehend.[26]

Another powerful advantage of comity to the missions was that it gave them freedom of choice in the employment of their money and agents. Schools and churches were built and agents located where they best suited the missionary. Influence which the people might bring to bear by threatening to "go over" to another society was reduced. In matters of discipline the societies feared inter-denominational competition which might tempt missionaries to "lower" the standard for admission of members.[27] In the long run comity was popular because it assisted the missions to maintain control. As the African churches said the major consideration was to keep the barriers up rather than tear them down.

It became a severe disappointment to the African churches that although Lagos was their point of origin they had been unable to break the hold of the missions over their adherents. The African churches never achieved respectable status in Lagos. Upper class society (wealthy merchants, the professionals, the civil servants) remained within the

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26. H. Johnston, The Gay-Dombeys, London, 1924, pp. 214-15.
27. Annual Letter to Lagos District Synod, Dec. 20, 1917, W.M.M.S. (Ibadan), 1/1/1.

missions. African church youths, educated for the professions overseas, upon return to Lagos sought membership in the missions not, as they privately admitted, because of conviction, but because of social and economic benefits.

In search of this illusive respectability, the cathedrals or mother churches of the organizations, especially Bethel and Jehovah Shalom, developed along the lines of Christ Church, St. Pauls Anglican, and Tinubu Wesley, towards greater formality and ceremony. With the expansion of Lagos, many left the crowded island and built residence on the mainland in Ebute Metta. The missionaries were slow to follow this movement-- the African churches quicker. They built large and respectable churches-- Salem and Bethlehem (African Church) and Christ Church (U.N.A.) which by 1914 surpassed the cathedrals on Lagos island in numerical and financial strength. The social strictures of Lagos were never completely transferred to Ebute Metta which engendered a kind of suburban social freedom condusive to the growth of the African churches.

Lagos was a city of comings and goings. New arrivals entered the city in search of economic or educational opportunities and returned a few years later to the interior for retirement or another kind of economic benefit. Many arrived pagan; it was up to the church to see they returned Christian. In the new and strange environment of Lagos the

pagan youth was particularly receptive to a new religion and he presented the church with an opportunity for evangelism which reached far beyond the confines of the city itself. The more sophisticated the churches remained, like the cathedrals, with English service and foreign music, the less they attracted the pagan immigrant. Those like St. Stephens (W.A.E.) and Araromi Baptist, used African music to attract and the Yoruba language to instruct. The new Christians with the enthusiasm of the convert returned to the interior eager to propagate the faith and call upon the denomination of their conversion for assistance. To a greater or less extent, all the churches followed their Lagos converts to the interior.[28]

A similar but more effective system operated at Agege. The construction of the railway enabled a number of African Churchmen, J.K. Coker, F.E. Williams, A.A. Obadina, and others, to escape the frustrations of Lagos economic and social conditions by the development of plantations of coffee and cocoa in the Agege district, a few miles north and west of Ebute Metta. By 1920 Agege was one of the richest agricultural areas in Nigeria. The income of the planters

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28. C.M.S. Proceedings, 1899; W.M.M.S. Reports, 1907, 1912; "In no place has the missionary been the actual pioneer of Christianity", Work and Workers, 1892, p. 216; Campbell, Origin of the Thirty-six Articles of Faith, p. 3; J.K. Coker to _____, n.d., Coker Papers.

was reflected in their churches which surpassed the combined Lagos and Ebute Metta churches in 1920 just as Ebute Metta had surpassed Lagos island in 1914.

The plantations required unskilled labour which was recruited in the interior and hired on a year's contract. Churches were built on the plantation where the labourers were encouraged to become Christians. They returned to their interior homes to propagate the faith and build churches. They appealed for assistance to the planter who accepted the position of patron, supplying building materials and agents' wages. In return the planter's generosity ensured a stable supply of labour for the plantation, an important consideration especially during the post war inflation when high wages in Lagos siphoned off labour which got as near to the coast as Agege.[29] J.K. Coker was the most generous of the Agege patrons. In 1918 he undertook the entire financial responsibility for Ikirun, Oyan and Idoanni evangelistic work.[30]

It was typical of African evangelistic endeavours to be of an individual rather than a group nature. This was

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29. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, July, 1912, ii, p. 124; Interview A.O. Coker, Dec. 8, 1961. For a fuller discussion of how cocoa and the African Church spread from Agege, see J.B. Webster, "Agege: Plantations and the African Church 1901-1920", Conference Proceedings of the Nigerian Institute of Social and Economic Research, 1962.

30. Opebi to Coker, Oct. 24, 1918, Coker Papers; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Oct. 22, and Feb. 10, 1918, Feb. 16, 1920; iv, pp. 157 and 172-8, 223-29.

of immense value in the propagation of a religion where the personal contact of an individual scores numerous advantages over the formal relations of a group. There was very little evangelism financed by societies in churches--women's societies or men's clubs.[31]

Individual activity blossomed in multiple forms. John O. George, one of the founders of the U.N.A., worked among the neglected and stubbornly pagan aboriginals of Lagos. Through his efforts, Erelu U.N.A. Church was built and an agent employed-- the financing and personal labour of evangelizing being carried out by George. Similarly, D.J.A. Oguntolu introduced Christianity to Otta, his native place. A.A. Obadina, who upon his retirement became a planter at Agege, was an employee of the Nigerian regiment. While stationed in Calabar he preached to the local people and was the first to open an opposition church to the Presbyterian mission.[32]

Sometimes these early pioneers were ordained and lived long enough to see the church of their conversion firmly established among their own people. S. Ogunmokomi has been mentioned in connection with the U.N.A. in Ikale. Charles Jemiriyi, a Lagos convert, established Araromi Baptists in

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31. They were attempted, see A.C.(Salem) Minutes, May 6, 1913, ii, pp. 143-4.
32. U.N.A. Minutes, Dec. 11, 1896, i, pp. 235-6; Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1891-1903, p. 6; Lagos Standard, May 24, 1899; Coker, "The First Five Years of the African Church 1901-1906"; The African Church Chronicle, Jan.-Mar., 1935.

his native Ekiti. In 1916 his long services were rewarded and he was ordained to become superintendent of the Baptist Ekiti Mission.[33]

In 1905 G.T.A. Thompson, a retired government pensioner in the Gold Coast, successfully gathered congregations in Accra and Sekondi. He came to Lagos, sought and gained affiliation with Campbell's W.A.E. Church who priested him to carry on his work. In 1924, after Thompson's death, but as a result of his work, the Christianborg Patriarchate of the W.A.E. Communion was organized under a Patriarch leading an ordained staff of five. The patriarchates of Assim, Ashantee and Cape Coast originated through similar individual activity.[34]

In a few cases the pioneer organizer operated his church or church organization for a fairly long time before considering it wise to affiliate. H.T. Scott organized an independent African Methodist church in Ibadan in 1922. G.M. Fisher, as a result of evangelistic work in Badagry set up an Independent Native African organization. Both ultimately affiliated with the U.A.M.(Eleja), Scott in 1936 and Fisher in 1947.[35]

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33. N.F. Fatunla, "Short History of the Baptist Mission in Ekiti District", Ogbomoso Library, N.B.H.C.: The Dawn, Oct. 1916.
34. Campbell, Report of the W.A.E. Communion, 1924; Autobiography of G.T.A. Thompson, 1914, W.A.E. Minute Book.
35. U.A.M.(Eleja), "Twenty Fifth Annual Report", 1942, p.15, typescript; Interview Supt. J.O. Okusanya, Mar. 12, 1962.

All the African churches in Ibadan resulted from the work of individuals. Besides Scott's church which became the U.A.M.(Eleja) in 1936, the Araromi Baptist began in 1905 by D.A. Obasa who was solely responsible for keeping the church operating for six years until Araromi could supply a regular clergyman. In 1910 E.H. Oke sponsored the building and running of the U.N.A. Church which did not receive the services of a regular clergyman till 1918. In 1912, J.N.D. Somuji, who had been operating a church and school turned them over to the African Church (Salem) and became a minister in that organization.[36] There was much co-operation and intercommunion between these churches in Ibadan. E.H. Oke assisted Obasa in opening the Araromi Baptists in 1905. Then Obasa helped Oke to open the U.N.A. in 1910. H.T. Scott was a founder of the African Church before he opened the African Methodist Church. The co-operative spirit survived in Ibadan with the churches freely participating in each other's special occasions.

The activities of the Agege Planters, especially J.K. Coker, as patrons of interior churches has been mentioned. Lagos merchants as well as Agege Planters were also patrons.

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36. The Dawn, Oct. 1916; Nigerian Baptist, Nov. 1927; U.N.A. Minutes, July 2, 1910, i, pp. 444-5; Oke, "Important Events of U.N.A. History 1891-1915", Manuscript; Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1904-1924, p. 10; U.N.A. Minutes, July 5, 1918, ii, pp. 202-04; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Sept. 3, 1912, ii, pp. 125-8.

T.D. Shaw was patron to the Ijebu U.N.A. churches supplying building materials and paying teachers' salaries. The Vaughan brothers, sons of J.C. Vaughan the American negro who played such a leading role in pioneer Baptist activity in Nigeria, were generous patrons to interior Baptist churches-- especially in Ijebu and Ekiti. Dada Adeshigbin, the Singer Sewing Machine agent in Lagos, acted as patron to the Ijebu and Ikirun churches. At one time he was personally responsible for agents' wages amounting to £200 per year.[37]

The bishop or superintendent was the link which held together the scattered local churches. If the organization was successful in finding an eager evangelist as superintendent, orderly expansion was assured. He must be a powerful orator in the pulpit in Yoruba and a fluent speaker in English to be able to confront the colonial officers as a spokesman for his people. He needed to be a tireless traveller, constantly on the move across the country, careful not to let the endless activities of Lagos engage his time. African churches expanded in proportion to the amount of time the superintendent-evangelist could spend in the interior.

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37. Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1891-1903, p. 3; U.N.A. Minutes, Sept. 24, 1900 and July 11, 1908, i, pp. 372-4 and 512-3; Roberson, "The First Baptist Church Lagos" pp. 15-16, Ogbomoso Library, N.B.H.C.; A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, July 1, 1919, iii, pp. 85-90; Coker, History of the African Church, 1941, Coker Papers.

Disputes within the governing body which occupied his time in Lagos were sure to have an adverse effect upon the interior churches. Members drifted off to other societies, church buildings were neglected, and agents unpaid.

An independent source of income which required a minimum of time was a vital necessity for the evangelist-superintendent. The African churches were prepared to pay the superintendent's salary. It was adequate to keep the family in Lagos, but travelling expenses might run to twice the amount of the salary.

Occasionally the prosperous churches provided the superintendents with a thankoffering, but the poorer churches (most of them were poor) actually looked to him for a donation to their funds. Agents and teachers in arrears of salary expected help. Priests engaged in new projects, building schools, purchasing organs or choir surplices were pleased with a small donation from the superintendent.

There was little evidence to show that the superintendent resented the reversal of what the missions would consider the normal order of church life. The superintendent was, after all, the biggest man in the organization who lived in the golden city of Lagos. Compared to the conditions in the remote villages he was a wealthy man. Faced with these circumstances the superintendent needed a private source of income and most who became successful had one.

A few like D.A. Hughes of the U.N.A. and J.A. Lakeru of the African Church owned cocoa plantations at Agege. An overseer or foreman operated the Hughes plantation. J.K. Coker endowed Lakeru with land and managed the plantation, freeing Lakeru for his evangelistic work. Lakeru drew money from Coker throughout the year. When the accounts were made up, and if the plantation had not made profits equal to the amount drawn, Coker wiped the records clean and opened up the following year's account in balance. Both Lakeru and Hughes had homes on the plantation where they spent their vacations. They had an intimate knowledge of cocoa cultivation.[38] This was an advantage in the interior where they could advise Christian farmers who were making their first experiments with cocoa. In their travels they easily combined administering the sacraments with advice on cocoa seedlings. One superintendent said that he preached the gospel of "coffee, cocoa, cotton, and work as well as the scriptures."[39] This practical knowledge gave them a distinct advantage over the bishops and superintendents of the mission societies.

Some, like D.A. Jones and J·S. Williams had property on lease in the Lagos area from which they gained a regular

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38. Ifako Farmers Meeting Minutes, Sept. 20, 1911, Coker Papers; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Jan. 10, 1912, and Aug. 18, 1919, and Dec. 17, 1919, ii, pp. 108-110, iv, pp. 203-7 217-18.
39. West African Mail, Aug. 28, 1903, quoting Agbebi, Superintendent of Native Baptist.

income. A few had wealthy backers. J.K. Coker assisted Agbebi and Lakeru as noted above. S. Alfred Coker, a prominent Wesleyan, financed J.G. Campbell of the W.A.E. Church. J.R. Shanu provided Superintendent A.O. Ijaoye of the A.C.(Penuel) with a monthly allowance. I.B. Williams, another wealthy Methodist merchant paid his brother J.S. Williams, superintendent of A.C.(Bethel), forty-eight pounds a year for sixteen years besides educating a number of his children.[40]

I.B. Williams, S. Alfred Coker, and J.H. Doherty were representative of the wealthy men of Lagos. They were willing to finance the African churches, but unwilling to attend them-- an indication of the African churches' failure to achieve respectability in Lagos.

Superintendents Agbebi and Campbell supplemented their income as columnists for Lagos newspapers.[41] D.A. Jones, S. Ogunmokomi, and J.S. Williams practiced as herbalists and Yoruba physicians, a vocation which provided an income

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40. U.N.A. Minutes, June 23, 1919, ii, pp. 258-64; "Report of the Sixth Anniversary 1909", W.A.E. Minute Book; A.O. Ijaoye, The Late J.R. Shanu, (Yoruba) manuscript, Oke Collection; Interview Charles Ijaoye and A.K. Lamilisa, Mar. 16, 1962.

41. Campbell contributed to the Lagos Standard and wrote a regular column in the Times of Nigeria. Agbebi contributed to the Lagos Observer and Standard and edited at various times the Lagos Times and Weekly Record. In 1916 he published the first Baptist magazine in Nigeria, The Dawn.

and mobility.[42] Only Agbebi received financial assistance from abroad-- from England with the assistance of the Colwyn Bay Institute, and from American Coloured through the Yonkers Men's Sunday Club in New York. Mark Hayford, superintendent of the Native Baptists of the Gold Coast (in affiliation with Araromi Baptists) received £1,000 in assistance from England, £200 from the United States, and £500 from Nigeria between 1898 and 1913.[43]

An active evangelist wife was an asset to the superintendents. Agbebi, Lakeru, and Campbell had wives who tramped with them over the Yoruba country organizing women's leagues, visiting the homes and preaching in the streets. Others took over the financial burden of the family by trading or teaching. Mrs. Agbebi operated her husband's printing press.[44]

The superintendent-evangelist left behind them an unpublished record of perseverance, devotion to duty, courage and suffering equal to anything in missionary records. The

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42. Memorial Plaque, Christ Church(U.N.A.) Ebute Metta; Obituary J.S. Williams, Nigerian Daily Times, July 27, 1933; Oke, Life Sketch of Solomon Ogunmokomi, Oke Collection.
43. Native Baptist Church vs. Mojola Agbebi, Suit no. 59, of 1903; T.L. Harrison to J.E. Bruce, Apr. 9, 1907, Schomberg (Bruce Papers); Year Book and Report, The Baptist Church and Mission and the Christian Army of the Gold Coast, London, 1913, pp. 68-114.
44. Interview Primate E.M. Olulode, Mar. 13, 1962; "Report of a Visit to Pepe Beach, Feb. 1909", "Missionary Journey to Idimu and Ado, July-August 1909", W.A.E. Minute Book; Account of Mojola Agbebi's Work in West Africa; Oke, "Report of the Third Triennial Conference of the African Communion, 1919-1922" typescript, Oke Collection; "Biography of Adeotan Agbebi", Roberson Collection.

very fact that they were not publicized to arouse sympathy or raise funds, but merely accepted as part of the service expected gave them a poignancy the customarily published stories failed to convey.

J.G. Campbell was stripped and beaten, paraded naked through a village by C.M.S. members and left in the bush unconscious. Discovered by pagans who covered his nakedness he was carried thirty miles to the government station where from his stretcher he pleaded his case before the D.O.. He had the consolation of receiving damages and hearing the C.M.S. priest sharply rebuked for his silent acquiescence in this display of denominational hostility. E.M. Lijadu records in his journal the weakening of his faith as he tramped day after day through water and mud, sometimes up to his knees, carrying his medical kit and portable communion set to bring the sacraments and relieve the distress of the sick among his people in the small villages of the Delta. D.A. Jones, then an old man, was hand-cuffed and treated as a common criminal only to receive an apology from the authorities for mistaken identity.[45]

The superintendents worked under the disadvantage that their orders had not been conferred by white men.[46] Many of the elite of their own society mocked and laughed at

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45. Campbell to the Lagos Standard, Aug. 18, 1915; W.A.E. Minute Book; U.N.A. Minutes, June 27, 1905, pp. 460-1.
46. Campbell, "This, That and Another", Times of Nigeria, July 11, 1921.

their presumption in ordaining to holy orders. Even in pagan villages where they gained respect as the first officials of Christianity it eventually became known that the white man disputed their right or authority because they had not the power passed on to them by the laying on of white hands. Struggling to overcome these misconceptions and to show the legitimate right of the black man to propagate Christianity, they fought the idea that Christianity was the white man's religion. They kept alive the African's claim to leadership in an age when it was being submerged in church and state. In a sense their struggle for individual recognition was the struggle of the entire African Church Movement.

The superintendents were the heart and soul of the African churches. They were the major bond of unity which held the organizations together. They prevented the massive splintering which in other places in Africa seriously weakened the cause of independent churches. Had all the Yoruba cities given birth to independent churches at the rate which Lagos did, the confusion would have been hopeless.

The superintendents channeled the discontent and guided the numerous local secessions in the interior churches into the organizations already established in Lagos. They maintained the hegemony of Lagos over the whole African Church Movement. Only one African church which developed independent

existence outside of Lagos survived, and its future is unclear. The success of the superintendents in developing African organizations over the whole of Nigeria which were in their origins Lagos and Yoruba spoke well for the Christian leadership of Africans. The politicians were not nearly as successful either in developing support for Lagos political protests or in holding the various tribes in partnership.

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The Shanu Mission at Oke Odan in the Egbado District was an illustration of the expansion of the African churches. It exemplified the individual nature of much of the enterprise, the devotion of the pioneers, the philanthropy of wealthy patrons, the discontent caused by mission policy and the part played by the superintendents in guiding an interior church heading for separate existence within the organization of an established African church.

Andrew Shanu was converted by S.A. (later Bishop) Crowther at Abeokuta in 1846. He went as an agent under a C.M.S. missionary to open Christian work in Oke Odan, his birthplace. In 1864 the missionary abandoned the town since his efforts had gone unrewarded. Shanu remained on, unpaid and forgotten by the mission society, but diligently preaching Christianity to his neighbours. After fleeing

to Lagos before the destruction of Oke Odan by the Dahmomean armies, he returned to help rebuild the town and preach until his death in 1902. He left but a handful of Christians as a memorial to his labours. Shanu's death appeared to end Christian work in Oke Odan.

His son, J.R. Shanu, a Lagos merchant had amassed a small fortune as an agent for an English firm in the Congo and a recruitment officer for contract labour for the construction of the Matadi-Stanleyville railway. He made large profits out of the short-lived boom in rubber around the turn of the century. With his capital he settled down to a lucrative trade in beads with the Hausa, conducted from a number of retail outlets in Lagos.

He had been especially concerned with evangelistic work in the jails and the rehabilitation of Christian prisoners, an interest which set him apart from the social "who's who" of Lagos. When his father died, J.R. Shanu was well-established financially. He was distressed that his father's years of Christian labour were threatening to come to naught. He approached his cousin, A.I. Ogunbiyi, one of his father's converts who was earning his livelihood as a bricklayer. Ogunbiyi consented to return to Oke Odan and take up his uncle's neglected work, J.R. Shanu promising to finance him. This agreement continued for sixteen years, Shanu providing the money and Ogunbiyi the labour. Between 1902 and Shanu's death in 1918 the

resistance of Oke Odan paganism began to give way before Ogunbiyi's preaching. Success followed in the surrounding villages and spread to other large towns-- Ilaro and Ajilete. Shanu spent lavishly on buildings and teachers. The largest church "Shanu Memorial," gave its name to the whole as "Shanu Memorial Mission." By 1917 the mission owned seventeen churches and boasted one thousand adherents.

The work had been carried on nominally under the C.M.S.-- the Anglican clergy from Abeokuta baptizing and administering the sacraments. In 1910 in order to bring the mission more directly under C.M.S. control, Oke Odan came under the Abeokuta District Council of the Anglican Church. It maintained control over its own finances and in possession of its property. In 1914 the C.M.S. closed the doors of the church against Ogunbiyi because he refused to remarry his only wife of sixteen years standing, in European custom. They also raised complaints of polygamy among the members.

This disrespect for Ogunbiyi's work persuaded Shanu to ask Superintendent A.O. Ijaoye of the African Church (Penuel) to oversee the work. For this service Shanu paid Ijaoye a salary and made an allowance in his will for a continuance of the arrangement. Shanu died shortly after the new system began to operate. In 1920 the Shanu Mission voted to join the African Church (Salem). Ogunbiyi was deaconed and priested and later consecrated bishop over the diocese or

district of Oke Odan which, unlike other dioceses of the African Church, possessed its own constitution which governed its special position within the larger organization.

During the years Ogunbiyi ordained five men to help him in the Shanu Mission. When he retired in 1952 the district contained thirty-four churches, ten schools, and an estimated ten thousand adherents.[47] After 1952 the mission lost much of its individual character becoming in practice as well as theory and intregal part of the African Church. The Shanu Memorial Mission was typical of the process by which local churches proud of their traditions and bound up with a provincial patriotism were gradually brought within more nation-wide organizations.

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Next to the interest over constitution and forms of organization (discussed in part four), African churchmen were engrossed in a debate over the nature of the church in Africa. The debate was conducted between two opposing cores of thought-- the one emphasizing the universal nature of the church and the other stressing its particular

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47. A.O. Ijaoye, "The Late J.R. Shanu", Oke Collection; Constitution of the Shanu Mission Church Organization, Lagos 1924; Nigerian Chronicle, Dec. 18, 1914; Bp. Ogunbiyi to the editor, n.d. (after 1924), Coker Papers; Interview Bp. Ogunbiyi and his son, Mar. 17, 1962.

and national characteristics. The Lagos or "Church" school of thought emphasized the universality of the church as it was known to them through the mission societies in their midst. The Agege or Evangelical school was more concerned with the national characteristics which they argued every branch of the universal church (except the African) possessed. They maintained that the slowness of Africans to imprint their culture upon the church was the reason why the church had been tardy in making converts. The stimulus to promote change was evangelical enthusiasm.

The "church" school grew out of the modern urban conditions of Lagos. It developed in a society already heavily committed to European modes of thinking, European goals and aims. It was composed of individuals trained to European thought, living in economic and social conditions in which traditional African ideas appeared peculiarly out of place. The Lagos school looked upon Yoruba society as in a transitional stage-- on the move towards something closely approximating that which prevailed in Europe.[48] There was a tendency (but only a tendency since the leading protagonist of such ideas were in the missions) to label African customs and beliefs unprogressive. There was conversely a willingness to accept European ideas somewhat uncritically. The influence of missionary teaching was

48. M.S. Cole to J.K. Coker, July 12, 1913; Coker Papers; H.A. Williams, African Hope, Apr. 1921.

strong which had almost substituted that earthly paradise, England, for the heavenly home. "Because it is done that way in England" became an irrefutable argument for doing it the same way in Lagos.

The Evangelical school grew out of the modern rural conditions of Agege. The plantations were the result of combining European economic technique and African social conditions. The planters, like the merchants and civil servants of Lagos, had been trained to European thought and were as much as they the products of world economic forces. Yet on the plantations the social system remained essentially Yoruba. The planter became the chief. He was arbiter and judge, benefactor and protector, and high priest leading in worship on Sundays. And he was employer. The planters believed they had discovered a system which provided the benefits of Europe without necessarily destroying the social fibre of Africa. They confidently expected the agricultural revolution of Agege would ultimately spread over the whole of Yorubaland.

The planters looked kindly upon traditional Africa and defended the utility of its social system built upon polygamy, community, chieftancy and secret societies. They attacked the uncritical acceptance of European ideas which prevailed in Lagos by continually pointing out the weaknesses and unchristian nature of European society-- its immorality,

its callousness, its rampant materialism and its self-centred small family units.[49] Only by destroying the glowing image of Europe which so many Africans held could Agege hope for a dispassionate appraisal of the African way of life.

The two schools of thought originated in divergent interpretations of the causes and aims of the African Church Movement. To Lagos the Movement's basic aim had been to prove the ability of African leadership to missionaries who had rejected it as ineffective. Other than this, Churchmen felt there was no reason to reject other mission policies-- the conditions of baptism, stress on education, organization, rites and ceremonies. To deviate from these essentials destroyed the Movement's basic aim. By "lowering standards" they were merely proving the missions' contention that African leaders were incapable. They were unduly suspicious of dogmas and forms designed especially for Africa since they believed that this was a tacit admission of African inferiority.

Churchmen agreed that many Christian forms were overlaid with much that was European. They argued, however, that in the fifty to seventy years of Christian missions they had accepted these forms which were no longer foreign. For

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49. J.K. Coker, Polygamy, manuscript, n.d.; Coker to Bp. Onatolu, Dec. 12, 1934; Coker Papers; H.S.A. Thomas, The African Hope, July 1921, p. 10.

many, new ceremonies based on African tradition had become foreign introductions. Morning and evening prayer and the old hymns of Christianity were not the exclusive preserve of the English nation. Originally learned from foreigners, they had become a vital part of divine service, loved and revered forms through which Africans now worshipped God. On a purely practical level they argued that if Christians were to be lured out of the missions, and the African churches built on their ruins then similar forms of worship would make the transition easy from C.M.S. to African Church, or from Wesleyan to U.A.M.(Eleja).[50]

The Evangelicals believed that the African Church Movement had been caused by more than a snub to African leadership and that the result should be a thorough reformation. They revolted against almost the sum total of mission policies. They maintained that the African Church was not created for a few thousand Christians in Lagos. What was familiar to them was foreign to the millions in the interior. Recent events had shown that the African churches need not depend upon mission exiles (as welcomed as they were) for their support. The African churches had gained widespread success among pure pagans who were the hope of the church. C.M.S. forms might well make an easy transition for those going from mission to church, but the

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50. Onatolu to Coker, June 3, 1919, Coker Papers.

process did work in reverse, the transition just as smooth.

The Evangelicals believed Lagos generally omitted the interior in its thinking. If the African Church continued to follow mission policy concentrating upon a dubious quality at the expense of quantity and supporting a hypocritical standard among its membership which could not stand scrutiny then both the missions and the African churches would awake to find themselves Christian islands in a Muslim sea. To Agege, Lagos thinking lacked evangelical fire and like the missions embodied a callousness to the masses who were knocking on the church's doors.

Churchmen became preoccupied with recognition and were restive in their isolation from the catholic world. Spurned by the mission societies in the week of prayer, comity agreements and educational policy the African Church especially, with its close affinity to the C.M.S. resented the favours which the Methodists enjoyed from that society. Recognition would bring respectability that illusive image which always escaped them, and drove their young men who rose to the professions out of the church into the missions. Bethel Cathedral (at the time of its construction the tallest building in Lagos) was an expression of this desire.

Lagos never lost hope of ultimately reuniting the African with the Anglican Church when the C.M.S. was ready to fully acknowledge African leadership. When the Lambeth

conference of 1920 discussed Christian co-operation, some in the African churches felt the time of reunion was approaching.[51] But the Lambeth discussions merely resulted in Anglican-Methodist co-operation which had ceased for a time from a spate of denominational fever.

Churchmen were particularly sensitive to the charge by the missions that the African churches were the result of African unwillingness to accept the moral teachings of the Bible. This was a polite way of referring to polygamy-- that "bête noire" of the African Church Movement. Lagos tolerated polygamy among the laity from necessity rather than conviction. It was the only card which the African Church possessed and furthermore the Bible appeared non-committal. But they continued to see monogamy as the ideal, the present policy being a temporary one considering the circumstances in which most Yoruba found themselves. Frightened of any extension of the policy of polygamy they fought against membership in the African Communion which possessed member churches who under the influence of the Evangelicals accepted rather than tolerated it. When Churchmen spoke of reform it was in the direction of returning to a policy of monogamy. Tolerating polygamy had not caused a massive inflow to the church. Some claimed it had hindered the growth of the

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51. H.A. Williams in Times of Nigeria, June 20, 1921; Campbell called the desire for reunion hankering after the 'onions of Egypt" Times of Nigeria, June 30, 1921.

churches.[52] Monogamy, even hypocritical monogamy, might bring respectability and recognition.

Churchmen aimed for respectability and recognition. Evangelicals aimed at a national Christianity which could only be attained by a massive ingathering of pagans into the church. All policies must be tested against this aim. Recognition would come with success. The missions would then have to either change policy or liquidate. To consider reunion before this aim was achieved, was defeat. To enter comity agreements was to perpetuate the evil they were seeking to mitigate. The Evangelical policy of supporting and encouraging unrest in the mission churches, and building a church across the street from every mission in Yorubaland to welcome the exiles, scuttled any chance Lagos might have had to gain respect or establish co-operation with the mission societies.

> Some men are so intent upon being recognized by the foreign churches in our midst and having their empty smiles that they have no time to devote to the building of a true and genuine African Church.[53]

The African Communion was the creation of the Evangelicals. It was the answer to the mission comity agreements. It provided for a united week of prayer, comity in evangelistic efforts and common action in educational policy. It

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52. Onatolu to Coker, June 3, 1919; Coker to Onatolu, n.d., Coker Papers.
53. "Unity in the African Church", The African Church Chronicle, Oct.-Dec. 1934, pp. 4-5.

aimed to unite the African churches in their striving for the common goal-- Yoruba national Christianity.

The Evangelicals accepted rather than tolerated polygamy. For this reason they favoured no restrictions upon the marriage customs of the clergy. The most extreme frowned upon monogamy and disapproved of the licensing of churches for European-style marriages.[54] Polygamy did not represent a lower standard of morality. Far from it, in some ways it was higher. Its regulation was provided for in the Old Testament and they claimed it was more suited to the conditions now or ever likely to prevail in Africa. Mission teaching on monogamy had not significantly changed the marriage customs of the Yoruba people, but thrown a veil over them. Acceptance of polygamy was the beginning of a policy aimed at a full indigenization of the church and acceptance of the total fabric of Yoruba social life. Upon full acceptance it was the duty of the church to regularize and purify-- not to uproot and destroy.

It was difficult to estimate accurately the strength of the following of the two schools of thought within the African Church Movement or its member organization. Among the clergy, those who had been trained and carried on evangelistic work for the missions either as priests or

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54. The U.N.A. and W.A.E. were not licensed, The A.C.(Bethel and Salem) were. W.A.E. Minutes, April 17, 1914.

catechist leaned toward the Lagos school. They were under attack by the opposition as being unable to speak except as they had been taught in the missions, having too long contamination with foreign systems and being unable to deviate from Anglicanism.[55]

Clergy, educated and trained within the African churches, inclined towards the views of the Evangelicals. They were fewer, generally younger and mostly in the lower ranks. The first of their number to achieve position became assistant superintendents in the U.N.A. in 1921. Otherwise mission-trained clergy monopolized the hierarchy.

Table Vl

Origin of clergy in the African churches 1915-1922.[56]

Organization	From C.M.S.	From Meth.	Mission Trained	Church Trained	Other sources	Totals
A.C.(Bethel)	4	8	12	0	2	14
A.C.(Salem)	6	1	7	11	1	19
U.N.A.	1	3	4	8	0	12
W.A.E.	1		1	8	1	10
Totals			24	27	4	55

The origin and background of the clergy (Table Vl) shows that while mission-trained and church-trained personnel were approximately equal over the whole African Church Movement they were unequally distributed as between the

55. Othniel Taylor, The African Church: Necessity for a Standard Policy, Lagos, 1932, p. 4; J.K. Coker, Sermon Notes, n.d., (after 1915); Aboyade-Cole to Coker, Apr. 2, 1927, Coker Papers.

56. Compiled from comparison of mission and African church sources and autobiographies customarily required before ordination.

individual organizations. The African Church (Bethel), the leader of the Lagos school was controlled by mission-trained personnel while the W.A.E., an organization of evangelical thought was led by clergy who had had no contact with the foreign missions. There was evidence that the background of the clergy was a fairly accurate guide to the origin of the laity. The A.C.(Bethel) membership was overwhelmingly "old Anglican" who felt that "our feet should be placed exactly in C.M.S. footprints."[57] Not two hundred of the four thousand members of the W.A.E. had previous experience under a mission society.[58]

The U.N.A. supported evangelical theories even though the General Committee (the highest governing body of the church) was controlled by mission-trained laymen. The Churchmen formed an active "reform" party which periodically sought to bring the organization back to catholic standards. It was responsible for the timid policy, noted above, of failing to provide priests for the rapidly expanding membership in Ikale. Prior to 1921 it fought and lost a determined battle to change U.N.A. policy on polygamy from Evangelical acceptance to Churchmen tolerance.[59] In the W.A.E. only

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57. Coker, "The African Church: Past, Present and Future Reviewed", The African Church Chronicle, Oct.-Dec., 1934, pp. 13-18.
58. Campbell to St. Arthurs Church, Accra, Mar. 13, 1920, W.A.E. Minute Book.
59. H.A. Williams in Times of Nigeria, June 20, 1921.

an occasional voice was raised in support of the policies of the Lagos school. The church went so far as to prohibit European marriage custom to its membership.

> Any agent of this church whether minister or lay agent who marries according to European custom be dismissed at once....[60]

In the A.C.(Salem) the balance between mission-trained and church-trained clergy and between dissident mission laymen and pagan converts was evenly balanced. While the church-trained predominated in numbers, the mission-trained held the positions of influence. The forces were so equally balanced that policies were the result of hard fought compromises. Friction and tension were severe. The result was deep and profound thinking upon the problems of indigenization.

Disputes frequently revolved around the issue of jurisdiction. If the matter was of a spiritual nature it was within the powers reserved for the bishop. If organizational, it was within the legislative rights of the General Committee. As an example, the General Committee under Evangelical influence had prescribed an ordination service which was felt reflected the African nature of the church. The bishop, maintaining that his jurisdiction had been infringed, quietly refused it, continuing to use the Anglican form. The bishop was castigated as an Anglican

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60. W.A.E. Minutes, April 17, 1914.

in spirit who failed to appreciate African customs.[61] It was ironic that the Anglican bishop joined the Agege Evangelicals in criticism of the policies of the Lagos school-- the great admirers of the missions. In an effort to justify the European outlook of the C.M.S. he pointed to the "so-called African churches."

> They call themselves 'African', but their services, the robes and titles of their ministers, their surpliced choirs are all borrowed from England... how are they distinctly 'African'?[62]

The Evangelicals failed to persuade the bishops and hierarchy to accept a change in the policy of polygamy from toleration to acceptance. But they had profound influence upon other policies of the organization. The evangelistic programme was vigorous. Accessions to the membership came from the missions and paganism. Opposition was overcome to a liberal policy of ordination, and as a consequence, the A.C.(Salem) had a larger number of priests than any other organization. The membership received the sacraments regularly since the Evangelicals believed that denial of the sacraments contributed to lapses into Islam and the mission.

The rapid growth especially among those too poor to contribute to the general finances of the organization put an unbearable strain upon the A.C. (Salem). Its financial

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61. Coker, Memorandum, n.d. (1935?) Coker Papers.
62. Bp. M. Jones, Ibadan Synod, May, 1936 quoted in the African Church Chronicle, July-Sept., 1936.

base was narrow, depending upon the plantations of Agege. When the prosperity of the plantations fell during the 1921 commodity prices crisis, the A.C. (Salem) almost collapsed.

Severe retrenchment was staved off by the reunion with the twin branch of the church, A.C. (Bethel), in 1922. Under the threat of financial collapse, ideological differences played a small part in the reunion. Otherwise it was unlikely the Evangelicals would have submitted with so little protest, to an arrangement in which they were hopelessly overwhelmed. Mission-trained clergy and the philosophy of Lagos dominated the reunited African Church organization. The reunion was a marriage of expediency. It reunited the financial resources of the A.C.(Bethel) with the numerical strength of the A.C.(Salem).[63]

One of the specific and contentious issues between the two schools of thought was over the qualifications of the agency-- the clergy and catechists. The breakup of paganism which began after 1910 produced a new problem. The demand for agents and teachers became so persistent and frantic that the combined resources of mission and African churches could not meet them. Agents were not being produced fast enough. The Training Institute, initiated by the Evangelicals in the A.C. (Salem) only began to produce graduates in 1921.

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63. A.C. (Salem) Minutes,(rough) Feb. 12, 1923.

There was the discouraging fact that the African churches could not attract the clergy of their own volition out of the missions and expulsions, though numerous, were not nearly sufficient to meet demands.

As an alternative, the Evangelicals pressed for the utilization of polygamous unordained catechists, honorary or unpaid agents and Yoruba speakers. They argued that this would make more use of men who had been converted in older life when already polygamous, who were financially established and who had not had the opportunity of English education.

Churchmen and the bishops, like the C.M.S. who rejected a vernacular clergy in 1910,[64] believed that Yoruba speakers besides being cut off from theological reading which was in English, lowered the prestige of the clergy. They pointed out that a few local churches had rejected clergymen not literate in English. Unpaid agents were prone to bring the clergy into contempt by disputes occasioned by their secular occupation, especially trade. Supported by private income they were less amenable to church control and discipline. Polygamous agents were a step towards a polygamous clergy which the church had prohibited in the constitution.[65]

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64. Ex. Co. Minutes, July 26-30, 1910, C.M.S., G3/A2/O, no. 126.
65. Interview Bp. Aboyade-Cole, Feb. 27, 1962; Supt. G.A. Oke, Nov. 10, 1961; A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 19, 1919, iii, pp. 102-12; Onatolu to Coker, June 3, 1919, Coker Papers.

By turning against these proposals the Evangelicals believed the church was placing undue emphasis upon youth, book-learning and intellectual attainment. They were rejecting the respect and traditional knowledge which came with age. They were substituting intellectual for spiritual power. Arguments about control were merely placing obstacles in the way of the spread of the gospel. The city churches might demand intellectual attainment, but in the villages the knowledge of English was of little utility and mainly a prestige symbol. Africa was varied and could accommodate and use priests of varying talents. There was a place for all.[66]

Cautious use was made of vernacular and honorary clergy but polygamous unordained agents were never employed by the African Church (Bethel and Salem) unless paid by a patron, in which case the church did not interfere. The issue remained an academic one until J.O. Shopekan (a monogamist), ordained by Campbell (a polygamous), applied to work for the A.C.(Salem). Customarily, priests who came to the African churches from the missions were given a public charge which occasionally resembled a recantation, but their orders were recognized as valid. Priests who transferred

66. Coker to the bishops 1922, Account Book; Coker to Committee of Arbitration, 1920? A.C.(Salem) Minutes (rough) June 25, 1917, Coker Papers; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Oct. 24, 1916, iv, pp. 73-6; A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 18, 1919; iii, pp. 102-12; M.T. Euler-Ajayi, "Annual Sermon", Conference Proceedings 1901-08, p. 24.

from one organization to another within the Communion did so only if they had the acquiescense of the church they were leaving. Shopekan had been a priest in the W.A.E. which was not a member of the Communion. The constitution did not cover such a contingency. The A.C. (Bethel) had re-ordained without hesitation when it had had to deal with a similar case. The Evangelicals expected this from an organization such as Bethel which frequently acted as arbitrarily as a mission society.

The bishops prepared to re-ordain Shopekan believing that ordination by a polygamist was contrary to the constitution and the desire of the church and was therefore invalid. They feared that if a polygamous ordination was allowed to stand the Evangelicals would use this as a lever to introduce a polygamous clergy. The Evangelicals pressed the point to the brink of division because the whole issue of the qualification of the clerical agency depended on the outcome. Bishops Lakeru and Onatolu refused to discuss the matter in the General Committee, defending the constitution which prohibited laymen from legislating on spiritual matters. They ignored the repeated resolutions of the Committee and forced the Evangelicals to back down or be responsible for a break and division in the church. Prominent Evangelicals retired into "passive membership." A committee of arbitration restored unity by persuading the Evangelicals to resume active membership in view of the financial crisis of 1920

which threatened to overwhelm the church.[67]

A more fundamental dispute took place over the conditions required of converts before they could be baptized and accepted into membership. The missions believing that the "uneducated are always a danger to the whole church"[68] demanded a two or three year catechumen period until candidates possessed a knowledge of the creed and the catechism, and were able to read the scriptures in Yoruba. The African churches had revolted against this system. They had laid down early that faith and "a few questions on faith and salvation at the discretion of the minister"[69] shall be the basis of membership.

After 1910 when Africans were pouring into the church it was no longer necessary for the African Church to contest with the missions for every member. The bishops used the discretionary clause to insist on longer periods of education prior to membership. By 1919 Bishop Lakeru was instructing his clergy to insist upon literacy in Yoruba before membership.[70] Statistics in 1921 confirm that the African Church

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67. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, July 16, 1918, iv, pp. 129-136; Lakeru to Coker, Dec. 1, 1917; Coker to the bishop, Apr. 25, 1918; Coker to Lakeru, May 24, 1918; Gooding to Coker, Aug. 5, 1918; Opebi to Coker, Mar. 22, 1920; Coker to Committee of Arbitration n.d. 1920, Coker Papers.
68. W.M.M.S. Report, 1920, p. 87.
69. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Aug. 30, 1907, ii, pp. 11-13.
70. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Apr. 22, 1919, iv, pp. 179-91.

ratio of members to adherents (1:7) was almost as high as in the missions. The U.N.A. on the other hand (1:4) was much more in line with Evangelical thinking.

The Evangelicals attacked this change as traitorous to the foundation aims of the Movement when the mission methods of "preach, teach, baptize," had been reversed to "preach, baptize, teach." The long catechumen period and emphasis upon intellectual ability discouraged many from considering Christianity. The same spiritual vacuum was created over which the policy towards polygamy had been fought. The bishops, they complained were always talking of quality as if a quick intellect was required for planting the faith. There were hordes in the missions who could produce a neat argument for Christianity but had not the slightest intention of translating their beliefs into action, nor had any conception of spirituality. If so, could the hierarchy give a satisfactory definition of quality. Was it intellectual attainment or financial support?[71]

After the reunion in 1922 and Evangelical influence diminished, Churchmen sponsored a change of official policy. A resolution was passed by the General Committee that made baptism conditional upon a confession of faith, a knowledge of catechism and literacy.[72] This gave the superintendents

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71. Coker's Sermon Note Book; Coker to Onatolu, n.d.; A. Thomas to Coker, Mar. 20, 1922; Coker to Onatolu, n.d., Coker to Taylor, June 30, 1927, Coker Papers.
72. Notice of General Committee Meeting, Feb. 9, 1922, Coker Papers.

official power to compel the Evangelical clergy, who continued to act upon the earlier resolution of the Committee, to conform .

Another dispute within the African Church Movement concerned foreign forms and ceremonies. Churchmen upheld the rites inherited from the mission for which they were castigated by the Evangelicals as "mimic Anglicans" and "old parrots of the C.M.S.."[73] The Evangelicals were willing to dispense with foreign forms but their distaste for ritual inhibited them from encouraging creative talent desirous of experimenting with new African ceremonies. They felt that ritual was an impediment or substitute for spirituality and interfered with contact between the worshipper and Christ.

In the first flush of enthusiasm after the foundation of the African Church, the clergy dispensed with the baptismal sign of the cross. The church was thrown into confusion and the exodus back to the C.M.S. provided a salutary warning of the danger of lightly tampering with custom. In the split of 1907, Churchmen of the A.C. (Bethel) re-established "the sign" while the Evangelicals in A.C. (Salem) voted against it.[74] Churchmen clung to mission

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73. Lagos Standard, Nov. 4, 1903, Coker, "Baptism", African Church Chronicle, Apr.-June, 1935, p. 9.
74. A.C.(Bethel), Conference Proceedings 1901-08, pp. 39-40, 63; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Aug. 9, 1907, ii, pp. 9-10; Coker, "The First Five Years of the African Church 1901-1906", Coker Papers.

forms; Evangelicals made barren services more austere. The sign of the cross was admittedly a minor matter, but the confusion it caused made a strong impression on both parties, that forms had best remain untouched in the interests of tranquility.

An Anglican conference among the Ibo opposed the majority of Ibo custom calling for civil action to prohibit them. One Ibo clergyman, who had spoken for toleration, pointed out how stupid it was for Anglican clergy to vote against the entire range of Ibo custom since few adherents or members would pay the least bit of heed. A hard line would simply benefit the Roman Catholic mission which provided a vigorous alternative to the C.M.S. among the Ibo.[75]

African secular customs continued to develop and modify outside the church. The missions, if the Ibo conference was any indication, were determined to maintain a hostile pose. African churches were willing to accept this, but unwilling to use their influence in the moulding process. The doors of the church were closed to debar any of this development being reflected in ceremonies within it. Whether African Church services were patterned after the C.M.S. or

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75. C.M.S., The Church and Native Customs, Lagos, 1914; M.S. Cole in a paper delivered to the Anglican synod said about Yoruba customs, "Even Christians are not free from the hold of these customs and so their Christianity becomes more a matter of outward deportment than of inward persuasion ..." "The Attitude of the Church to Native Customs", Anglican Synod Reports, 1912-14, Appendix 6, p. 119.

stripped as bare as the Baptists, they remained a European creation in an African setting. Neither Evangelicals nor Churchmen perceived the value which might lie in exploiting African talents in music-- both song and dance-- within the church. The creative impulse when it came, originated among a younger generation, less committed to either Churchmen or Evangelicals and critical of both.

> ... in practice, form of worship, custom and other paraphernalia we are still serving our time as pawns or liberated slaves who have naturalized in the country of their bondage, and unless all to one man are prepared to change, our existence, our boastings and vauntings as an African Church are a farce... [we are]... still in the arena dancing to the tune of... [our] foreign masters.[76]

One issue was church music in an African idiom. The missions did not forbid it, but neither did they encourage it as a desirable development. It had been first used as a necessity among pagan illiterates by Rev. James White of the C.M.S. at Otta in 1857. Sometimes it was used in open-air services to attract the pagans, but it was not considered "proper" for formal service. The U.N.A. had begun its use in 1891 and were prosecuted in the courts for profaning a holy ediface.[77] African music was not respectable, associated with the old, rather than the new Africa. It was intimately connected with paganism[78] and was in the process

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76. Ayo Ajala "The African Communion: Its Aims and Objects", African Church Chronicle, Apr.-June, 1936, pp. 10-13.
77. C.M.S. Proceedings, 1895; W.M.M.S. Report 1900; Presidential Charge to the U.N.A. Annual Conference, Sept. 1962.
78. "Let no step be taken which revises in any form the spirit of worship of the old religion". Nigerian Pioneer, May 21, 1926.

of being adapted by Muslims. Many, especially in Lagos, had lost their ear for it. It was becoming foreign.

Agbebi began its extensive use among Araromi Baptists in Lagos. In the interior where churches were developed among pagans, Agbebi did not introduce European hymnology but began from the first with African music. Upon the establishment of the U.A.M (Eleja) in 1917, that organization quickly rose to prominence in music under the inspiration and creative genius of A.K. Ajisafe, an outstanding African hymnologist. Drums and symbols were taboo until they were introduced by the Ethiopian and Brotherhood churches, two small groups established after 1918.[79]

A long step forward was taken in 1918 by the formation of the African Church Choir Union which aimed to improve Native airs for divine service and popularize Native music by means of special concerts. Ajisafe moved to Bethel Cathedral where facilities were available for his talents. Encouraged by an enthusiastic young priest, Aboyade-Cole, they attempted to develop Native music in the cathedral. Ajisafe created a new litany which Aboyade-Cole introduced into the services. It did not find favour with the authorities and was withdrawn. Native hymns continued to be used in

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79. Eko Akete, Feb. 3, 1923, p. 4 and Apr. 28, 1923, p. 5; W.A. Amakiri, "History of Buguma Baptist Church", Ogbomoso Library, N.B.H.C.: U.A.M. (Eleja) Twenty Fifth Annual Report, p. 16.

spite of resistence. In 1936, eighteen years after they had been in use in the cathedral, Native airs were sanctioned for use throughout the organization.[80]

The greatest contribution to Christianity by the African churches was in the field of hymnology. The Native Baptists published the first hymn book in 1906 by means of a loan from the mission society which was repaid from sales. J.W. Vaughan was the most outstanding composer. The W.A.E. general conference of 1910 resolved to publish a hymn book which first appeared in 1913. In 1904 the U.N.A. appointed a committee which printed a hymn book in 1914. It was reprinted in 1919. Revised and enlarged by including the compositions of composers from other churches, it was republished in 1939.[81]

In 1918 the African Communion resolved to publish a hymnal for use in all its member churches. Two delegates from each of the churches formed a committee. Money was collected and lost in the bankruptcy of the Industrial Bank. Collections were taken again, and finally in 1941 a large hymnal was produced.[82] The African Church through

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80. African Church Chronicle, Oct.-Dec. 1936.
81. Roberson, "Historical Sketch of First Baptist Church," Ogbomoso Library, N.B.H.C., Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1904-1924, pp. 2-4; Second Annual Conference, Oct. 1910, W.A.E. Minute Book; Interview Mrs. Grace Campbell, Mar. 1962.
82. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Sept. 2, 1918, iv, pp. 147-54; African Church Chronicle, April-June, 1936.

the influence of the Lagos school did not share her sister organizations' enthusiasm for African music. Ultimately however, the idea became popular and most churches used as many as four hymnals: the Anglican, the African Communion, their denominational, and a district hymnal the creation of a particularly talented local organist.

Other than music, the African churches were tardy to "distinguish the camp." Blyden in 1891 advised that the chiefs be enrolled, like European monarchs had been brought in, without too great exaction.[83] After the establishment of the African Church, overtures were made to the Eleko of Lagos, who co-operated by attending the church and extending an invitation to hold services at his palace, but he could not be persuaded to declare for the African Church.[84]

Better results were secured in Abeokuta through accommodation with the Ogboni Fraternity-- a secret society which held wide political power among the Egba. The missions prohibited their members from joining the Ogboni. An Anglican priest in 1914 attempted to organize a purged Ogboni-- the Christian Ogboni. The Anglican bishops forbade the use of the term "Christian" and the African churches supported this decision.[85]

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83. E.W. Blyden, The Return of the Exiles, p. 27.
84. Lagos Standard, July 15, 1903.
85. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Jan. 12, 1914, ii, pp. 160-2; S.C. Phillips, The Heathen Cult Called Reformed Ogboni Society, Ibadan, 1956.

Later the Ogboni Assembly asked that Christian children be allowed to accept their fathers' titles. The General Committee of the African Church agreed upon two conditions--that Christians be not forced to use heathen rites and that they be given Christian burial. The Ogboni granted these concessions with a significant addition-- their willingness to learn and use Christian forms of blessing.[86]

In the year of reunion when the Evangelicals witnessed the defeat of so much of their cherished programme, they had the pleasures of seeing the rules of the church changed to permit members to accept Ogboni titles. A number of Ogboni chiefs embraced Christianity and became baptized members of the African Church. In certain Ogboni houses, Christian practice replaced pagan rites.[87]

Accommodating the Ogboni Society was in the nature of the organization's external relations and did not require changes within the ceremonies of the church. Ritual in the cathedrals of Lagos copied the high Anglicanism of Christ Church. While more originality would have been commendable, this copying was welcome since English Evangelical barreness pervaded all the churches, mission as well as African. The failure to appreciate the value of ritual in worship must be blamed upon the Churchmen of the Lagos school.

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86. Coker, "The African Church: Past, Present and Future Reviewed", African Church Chronicle, Oct.-Dec. 1934; pp. 14-15; Coker's History, Coker Papers.
87. Notice of General Committee Meeting, Feb. 9, 1922, Coker Papers.

One outstanding development of ritual was the composition of a litany for the dignified and beautiful Yoruba "naming ceremony" for infants. This pagan rite had much to commend it to Christianity. Bishop A.I. Ogunbiyi's naming ceremony litany[88] (in use unofficially in the African Church) has never received the organization's official blessing. It was a pity that the timidity of Churchmen prevented encouragement and sanction for such creative activity.

If Churchmen, inspired by the C.M.S., were indifferent to ritual, Evangelicals were hostile, mostly because what had been introduced was a copy of English forms-- the copying itself being anathema to Agege. Had Churchmen experimented with unique rituals related to Africa, Evangelicals might well have lent their support. It was most deplorable that Churchmen did not utilize the wood and bronze carving art of the Yorubas in the decoration of their cathedrals and that ugly brass eagles for the lecterns continued to be imported from England. The one example of local carving in an African church met a tragic end. In 1908 a carver placed a memorial to J.E. Ricketts, (a West Indian Missionary who worked under Agbebi) in the Native Baptist Church in Lagos. After reunion with the mission society in 1914, the missionaries were instrumental in having the memorial removed in the interests of conformity

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88. Rev. Supt. A.I. Ogunbiyi Iwe Iko-Omo-Jaki ati Lati Owo, Lagos, 1926.

to Baptist practice.[89]

Had the African churches encouraged the carver's art, and abandoned imported stained glass windows to the missions, their buildings today could have been veritable treasure houses of African art. In addition to the stimulus which this patronage would have given to a school of Christian carvers, it would have improved the image of the church among the rising generation. The Nationalist Movement created an interest in Africa's artistic past. It also created an educated class indifferent to the church. As preservers of the artistic past African churches might have developed the sympathy of this class for the church.

What little was done was again accomplished outside the walls of the church. In the cemeteries of Lagos, statuary with African features is almost entirely confined to the tombstones of African Churchmen. They form pleasing landmarks among the myriads of European angels and foreign features. Although unmistakably of European-borrowed technique they are a beginning. It is to be hoped that in future they will be followed by efforts to regain some of the vitality of traditional African figures.

In the first twenty or thirty years of African Church history decorated buildings appeared as a luxury easily done without. More urgent problems occupied the thoughts

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89. "Dedication of Araromi Chapel," Lagos Weekly Record, Oct. 16, 1909.

and energies of the leadership. Its greatest challenge was the creation of a satisfactory and stable form of government. Again the two schools of thought diverged in policy although the line of demarcation was more blurred than in the disputes over evangelism. Rather unexpectedly it was the Evangelicals who supported episcopal authority and superficially at least were prepared to copy the Anglican system. Churchmen advocated strong lay powers.

From what has gone before, especially the bishops' support for the general views of Churchmen this may appear as a contradiction. Possibly it was, but the reason was well founded. The Evangelicals' main concern was evangelism. This aim was best promoted in their view, by a strong episcopate which gave autocratic control which could direct the greatest amount of the organization's energy and finances towards that area of church life which they held most dear-- the evangelization of the Yoruba.

Lay control invariably strengthened the local churches, and weakened the central organization making it more difficult to deploy the financial and other resources of the wealthy to the benefit of the infant and weak churches. Thus the A.C.(Bethel), the leader of the Lagos school, with its unhappy combination of lay control, local church autonomy and refusal to accommodate itself to African society through the operation of "Church" views almost

stopped moving on the missionary frontiers.

Of the three organizations most influenced by the Evangelical tradition, two gave ultimate power to the clergy. In the W.A.E. organization the laity wielded little influence. The A.C. (Salem) had a wiser and better balance, but the clergy held supreme power over spiritual concerns which covered a wide range of matters vital to the heart of the church. The U.N.A. alone reserved final power to the laity.

In the reunion of 1922, the Evangelicals appeared to lose all. They did gain one immense victory. In the new constitution the governmental structure of the A.C. (Salem) became the form for the united church. For the first time a primate was appointed which signalized a victory for the authority of the bishops. The Evangelicals hoped that the greater financial resources of the reunited church could be channelled by means of this centralization towards evangelization of the pagan.

PART IV

Church Government

> To pull to pieces, to reduce to atoms, to break, to tear, to disorganize is often the inclination of thoughtless childhood. Such a trait of character is to be met with among some Africans... Do not tolerate disorder. It is one of the besetting sins of Native organizations that man desires to be the leader. It is the spirit of slavery, and is more manifest among Europeanized Africans than among Africans purely Native. Recognize leadership.
> (Mojola Agbebi, 1902.)

A theoretical analysis of how African church government operated will be followed by an examination of two specific organizations which illustrate the theory. There is no intention to pretend that African churches conformed to a strict pattern. They didn't. The theory sets forth the norm which Churchmen considered constitutional behavior. Deviations were either unconstitutional or precedential. The theory discusses the four major groups which influenced the government and sets forth their rights and privileges and the limits to their respective powers as prescribed by public opinion.

In the enthusiasm of the early years and the reaction against the missions there was a naive equation of clerical control with autocracy and oppression, and lay government with democracy and freedom. Experience produced more mature thinking. Clerical control might result in hypocrisy and cringing, but lay control had caused continual disorder and confusion. It was the gradual achievement of a balance which is our primary concern.

There were four factors in the governing authority of the African Church-- the elders, the junior leaders, the clergy, and the congregation. Eldership required wealth, a personal following, and a respected position of leadership within the community. It required a reputation for personal generosity, participation in philanthropic enterprise, and unstinted patronage of the church. J.W. Cole, one of the top ten African merchants and vice-president of the Chamber of Commerce, was the wealthiest member of the Lagos elite to join the African Church Movement before 1900. He was the chief patron of Jehovah Shalom (U.N.A.) in Lagos as well as the chief elder of the U.N.A. organization. He had been a supporter of Blyden and a member of the Governor's Legislative Council (1895-7) where he successfully pleaded for government assistance to the U.N.A. school-- the first indigenous institution to receive treatment equal to that given the mission schools.[1]

H.A. Caulcrick and E.H. Oke, elders of the organization, founders and chief patrons of Ebute Metta and Ibadan local churches respectively, held senior posts in the Colonial civil services. Caulcrick received the Imperial Service

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1. Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1891-1903, pp. 3, 15-16; Iwe Irohin Eko, Nov. 1, 1890; E.W. Blyden, The Return of the Exiles and the West African Church, London, 1891, p. 33; Campbell, "This, That, and Another", Times of Nigeria, June 27, 1921; Denton to Chamberlain, Nov. 23, 1896, C.O. 147/107.

Order for his work in the Treasury.[2] Oke retired from the Department of Justice, became secretary to the Ibadan Native authority, and a member of the Legislative Council representing Oyo Division between 1924 and 1930. He was founder and president of the Egba Agba-o-tan, an organization to preserve and publish material on Ibadan custom and culture, and the president of the Ibadan branch of the National Congress of British West Africa.[3]

G.A. Williams, another elder, witnessed the tragedy of the Niger. His story was in essence its history. As an agent for an African merchant, he lost his position when the Niger Company perfected its monopoly. Employed by the company, he later fell victim to its Europeanization policy. The circumstances surrounding the downfall of Crowther left a vivid impression upon him. Upon return to Lagos he acted as editor of the Lagos Weekly Record and in 1893 established his own paper, the Lagos Standard which he edited until his death in 1919. He was interested in all the progressive and radical protest movements of Lagos, president of the Native Literature Publishing Society, executive member of the Aborigines Protection Society, and vice-president to the Anti-Slavery Society Auxilliary. His reputation was

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2. Memorial Plaque Christ Church, U.N.A. Ebute Metta; Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1891-1903, chapter 11; Deniga, African Leaders, pp. 27-8.
3. "Funeral of the late Mr. Oke", Nigerian Daily Times, Oct.3, 1930; Interview, G.A. Oke, Sept. 10, 1961; Oke, Important Events in History of U.N.A. 1891-1915, Oke Collection; Lagos Weekly Record, June 10, 1920.

enhanced by fines for libel, once for an anti-missionary article, and once for an attack against the establishment at the time of the land question deputation.[4]

The elders were the inspiration behind the establishment of the U.N.A.. They donated or purchased its land, contributed to the building and furnishing of the edifices, and provided at least three quarters of the organization's finances. J.W. Cole purchased and converted Pheonix Hall into a church, kept the school solvent and cleared deficits. Similarly, H.A. Caulcrick patronized Ebute Metta and E.H. Oke, Ibadan.

The elder formed the apex of a pyramid of followers, the size dependent upon his wealth, influence and family. His position rested upon his leadership of an extensive family or as leader of the people from the area in which he had been born. He loaned capital to merchants and traders. He stood surety for small traders for credit with the large firms or for young men seeking employment. He was responsible for the education of youths within his following. He was expected to use his influence to procure employment or favours. His followers turned to him in all cases of

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4. D.H. Hughes "Memorial Address", The African Hope Supplement, Sept. 1919; U.N.A. Minutes, June 1, 1906, pp. 447-482; Lagos Standard, Mar. 1, 1905; Rt. Rev. Paul Pellet, Vicar Apostolic vs. G.A. Williams, Apr. 19, 1899, Chief Justice Record Book, vol. 22; Sapara Williams vs. G.A. Williams and J.B. Benjamin, June 16, 1914, Chief Justice Record Book, vol. 72.

emergency. A wedding or funeral celebrated in a manner below the standards expected of the participants was as much a disgrace to the elder as to the immediate family. Normally the elder did not expect or demand repayment of the loans which he gave out.[5]

The wealth of the elder held the pyramid together. He could expect obedience, and prior attention to his requests from his followers. He performed the function of arbiter and judge in disputes within the pyramid. Failure to obey his ruling could result in a lawsuit for return of capital loaned or withholding of further patronage.

The pyramid was not a mass of people with personal loyalty to the elder. It was composed of junior leaders (not necessarily juniors in age, but in the extent of their following) who led family or small groups. The elder dispensed patronage through them. Their leadership, in turn,

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5. J.K. Coker provides an excellent example of the elder and his relationship to his pyramid. For standing surety out of numerous examples see J.K. Coker to McIver and Co. 7/6/06; Thomas and Sons to J.K. Coker, 19/9/17; Craig to J.K. Coker, 27/8/17. Between 1919 and 1922 Coker was educating twenty-eight children, twenty-one in primary (only nine of which were Cokers), four in secondary school, three in higher education (two in England and one in America), see school fees slips, Oct.-Nov. 1922; Eko High School Reports 1919; Adeniga Coker to J.K. Coker, 11/9/22; Interview, Aboyade- Coker, 12/9/61; For a funeral occasion see Phillip Coker to J.K. Coker. 12/12/18; For requests for patronage see A.C. Olopade to J.K. Coker. 12/10/20; For philanthropy see A. Folarin to J.K. Coker. 22/1/17; E.A. Allen to J.K. Coker, n.d. 1920. Coker Papers.

depended upon the elder's continuing good will. If the junior leaders increased in wealth, they could become less attached to the pyramid. Ultimately they borrowed from the elder on a "repayment plus interest" basis. They were on their way to becoming independent or elders at the apex of their own pyramid. Other individuals-- teachers, clergymen, writers-- might opt for this kind of relationship with the elder in order to preserve their personal independence.

An elder could not be such without wealth. If he lost it, customarily he lost his following.[6] But money alone did not automatically confer the position. The general respect of the community gained through public activities of a political, philanthropic, and religious nature was also necessary. A reputation for parismony or western-type small family selfishness could easily destroy an elder's public image.

If the elder stood for a set of principles which passionately appealed to his following, the mercenary and ideological bonds which held the pyramid together were strong and durable. Such a pyramid often survived economic disaster.[7] The elder could rely upon his followers to

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6. Coker lost control of his pyramid during his bankruptcy 1905 (see p. 295): A.W. Thomas lost his in the crisis of 1921. (see p. 330).
7. Because of the principles of Evangelism which Coker espoused, he held the loyalty of many within his pyramid during economic disaster.

assist him financially to recover his economic position.

A small local church might possess one elder, the pyramid and congregation being one and the same. A larger congregation divided its allegiance among three or four elders. A strong elder with decided views on church policy, like J.W. Cole, used his influence over his followers to force his ideas upon the church. Others might be content to represent their followers, to reflect the views and ideas of the junior leaders within the pyramid.

The prominent positions in the church were held by the elders-- lay preachers, class leaders, parish committee and school board members, treasurers, and chief contributor to the funds. Title deeds to the land and buildings were under their personal control. Policy required the unanimous consent of the elders, which in turn guaranteed the approval of the congregation. Where as in Lagos, economic opportunity created a number of independent junior leaders, unanimity was more difficult to achieve. Often these independents combined to form a faction or co-operative circle within the congregation. The circle leader became an elder, but of a different kind, acutely sensitive to the ideas of the faction. It was difficult for him to bend in the interest of unanimity without losing his leadership to others. The instability of the co-operative

circles and the hard postures they were forced to assume occasionally caused confusion and brought decision-making to a grinding halt.[8]

Permanent deadlock in the General Committee of the church could not be resolved by an appeal to the vestry since the split in the Committee was reflected in the congregation. Vestry votes were occasionally taken, to persuade a recalcitrant minority to give way. Often they had an effect upon co-operative circles who professed adherence to the majority principle. The pyramids were less amenable. A majority vote was not accepted as a valid basis for policy.

Under these circumstances the chief elder as chairman of the parish committee or the General Committee was a powerful figure in the smooth operation of governmental machinery. Besides his influence as elder of the largest pyramid, he was allowed, as chairman, considerable manipulatory power over business procedure. His success depended upon his ability to compromise, to prevent decisions being taken until assured of unanimity, to lobby, and to see that all pyramids and circles were fairly considered for appointments to office.

In committee the agenda had to have his approval. He

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8. The best example of a co-operative circle was the minority party which formed an opposition to Elder Thomas in the A.C.(Bethel) and was led by Dada Adeshigbin. (see p. 320).

delayed contentious motions by requesting prior notice, then used his influence outside committee to see the motion was never raised. If the mover was adamant, he might persuade the elders to permit it a place on the agenda. If division persisted after a full and frank exchange of ideas, the chairman could suspend discussion. If the motion was put against his wishes he could defer it, a process which might be repeated for months or even years. Sub-committees were other favourite delaying devices.[9]

If the chairman was confident of his control he might allow the motion to be put to the meeting (that is if the mover was tactically so inept as to move). It would be unanimously defeated, voted down by those who moments before, had spoken in its favour. The proposal was then refused further place on the agenda since a decided issue could not be re-raised for six months to a year. An adverse vote signified the elder's pyramid was dissolving. Sometimes an elder stood against the expressed wishes of the majority for years. Upon his death or removal, a long list of measures held up by his opposition were suddenly translated into policy.[10]

Customarily the elders stood for conservatism leavened by an astute ability to compromise. The junior leaders,

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9. See pp. 277, 328.
10. See pp. 279, 286, 330.

those within the pyramids or co-operative circles, often represented the radical and progressive. The elders of the following generation emerged from their ranks. Generally they began as retail traders or commission agents (R.A. Williams), junior civil servants (T.D. Shaw), small planters or farmers (D.A. Hughes), or Yoruba physicians (D.A. Jones).[11]

They held positions as organists, choir masters, teachers, and evangelists within the church. A following was usually attracted by their ideas and beliefs, and their will to change the established order. They held the majority of seats in church committees, and occupied subsidiary positions as secretaries, assistant secretaries, and auditors. Their majority did not give them control even if united against the policy of the elders.

If the power of the elders was weakened by death, economic misfortune or dissension, the junior leaders might occupy the positions generally held by the former. The result often indicated their political immaturity. They were unable to maintain unity among themselves. They passed impulsive and radical legislation for which the

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11. Memorial Plaque Christ Church, U.N.A. Ebute Metta; J.K. Coker vs. J.O'Connor Williams, Chief Justice Record Book, vol. 17, p. 129; Interview G.A. Oke, Nov. 10, 1961; Native Service Record Books, vol. 3, p. 130, Ibadan, CSO2/13; U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 17, 1919, pp. 239-242; Farmers Meeting Minutes, Ifako, Sept. 20, 1911, Coker Papers.

congregation was unprepared. The junior leaders failed to realize that since they did not control a large personal following like the elders, intensive educating of the congregation as to the purpose of their new legislation was necessary.

The clergy were chosen from among the junior leaders. Their chance of success increased in proportion to their independence. Those too closely identified with one or other of the pyramids remained suspect. For this reason the African churches showed a marked aversion to the ordination of elders. Not one became a clergyman prior to 1920 though many aspired to the office.[12] An independent origin was enhanced by ordination. A sincere and able clergyman was able to command respect and gain influence over a congregation in a way which cut across the pyramids, circles, and factions in a unusual manner.

The power of the clergy partly arose from their independence from the sullied and shoddy relations which often held the pyramids together. Partly it grew out of Yoruba Christian's belief in the divine sanction which accompanied ordination. Sometimes the women, (excluded from the governing bodies of the church), many of whom were independent leaders in their own rights, were strong

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12. Elder J.K. Coker actually wore clerical dress. Mrs. C.G. Lumbley to J.K. Coker, Aug. 6, 1920, Coker Papers. For similar aspirations of J.W. Cole see H.A. Williams to the editor, Times of Nigeria, June 20, 1921.

clerical supporters.[13] On occasions of friction and deadlock, the advice of the clergy was of convincing impartiality. They spoke as if the entire congregation was their pyramid.

With few exceptions, the African churches were fortunate in their choice of clergy. Their integrity and education could have brought them remunerative positions in government and commerce had they chosen. They were poor. Their humble circumstances were in marked contrast to the ostentatious display of clothes and wealth of the leading laity. That they had the moral courage to lecture the elders on their sins gave the clergy prestige. Those who implicitly obeyed their elders, nevertheless enjoyed their occasional discomfiture.

It was vital that the clergy thoroughly appreciated the role of the elders and the necessity of unanimity. A wise pastor never sought to directly challenge the chief elder. If he did so, his defeat was almost certain. His power was strictly that of moral suasion. Applied over months, many elders saw their duty and did it.

From what has gone before, it would appear that the voice of the congregation expressed through the vestry meeting was merely a rubber stamp. When the vestry was called upon to pronounce on a deadlock issue in the committee, the vote at the end formed a minor part of the

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13. For a similar situation in the Ethiopian churches of South Africa see Sundkler, Bantu Prophets, 1961, p. 142.

proceedings. In the pre-vote discussion the elders and junior leaders were thoroughly lectured on their inability to take decisions, on their factiousness, and selfishness. Proposals were put forward and debated, rejected, others introduced, and possible solutions suggested.

The vestry was jealous of its prerogatives. Normally it voted back the same members into office year after year. Yet any effort to tamper with its right of election created a general revolt. It was believed to be going too far, to defeat an elder standing for office. If in the heat of election it ever happened, the winning candidate with the approval of all, stepped down for the defeated elder.

The system was effective. The vestry was a last resort after all other avenues to peace had been explored. It was not a pleasant experience for an elder to face a vestry exposure of his sins of omission and commission. Many an elder left the vestry in a rage. The bonds of the pyramid prevented an adverse vote, but they did not muzzle free speech. Once a dispute had been laid before the vestry it became public and the wider community exerted pressure. The weekly press occasionally joined in cajoling a stubborn elder.

The whole government structure shunned a majority decision. Between 1900 and 1920 in the African Church Movement policy was not initiated a dozen times without unanimity. In half of the instances where it was, the

result was confusion, disaffection, stagnation, withheld finances and retrogression. It was doubtful if the reform-- no matter how urgent-- was really worth it.

To the western-trained, the frustration appeared unbearable. This was possibly one reason why the African churches appealed so little to those educated in England. It helped to explain the conservatism of the movement. By the time the junior leaders had become elders and were able to initiate policy, the radical ideas of their youth had become conservative by the standards of the new age. Opportunities were missed, the young disheartened and finances disorganized. On the other hand, once a unanimous decision had been taken, it could be executed with exceptional vigour.

Many youths supported the majority principle only to abandon it when they became elders. This was realism. Majority decisions were incompatible with eldership. A disruptive situation arose when the number of independents equalled or exceeded those within the pyramids. The demand for the majority principle challenged eldership. In such situations the criticism that every African aspired to leadership had some validity. To base consent upon majority votes would have led to endless division and splintering. Large united organizations were the result of adherence to the principle of unanimity suited to the economic and social conditions of the membership. In

other fields the African churches have been castigated for their rigid adherence to foreign forms. In the governing authorities which they developed, they balanced a judicious blend of Africa and the West to create something unique, something adapted to the modern Africa in which they lived.

Out of the nine African churches of the period, two have been selected to illustrate the foregoing theory. The U.N.A. and African Church Organization demonstrate contrasting methods and results in their development. The former worked through patient compromise to a lay dominated organization. The latter through ceaseless turmoil to clerical control.

In 1891 the elders and junior leaders who established the U.N.A., drew up a skeleton constitution which indicated their Methodist and Anglican background. It signified the desire to enshrine lay control by means of a lay president. In doctrine and usages the new organization would resemble the Methodists. The Sunday morning service followed the Anglican litany while the evening provided for extempore prayer as in the Methodist fashion.[14] Six lay founders

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14. Report of the rules and regulations sub-committee, U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 24, 1891, pp. 9-13.

constituted themselves into the General Committee, the supreme and only governing body.

There was reluctance on the part of the elders to stand for election. During the first five years they did not seek any kind of mandate from the people. Occasionally dissatisfaction was hushed by co-optation of extraordinary members. Both times this method was resorted to, a permanent enlargement of the General Committee followed.[15]

The General Committee employed D.B. Vincent (later Dr. Mojola Agbebi) to minister to the new organization. Vincent, previously a Baptist, had been one of the leaders of the secession from the Baptist Mission in 1888. He had been operating a school for Baptist children which he brought under U.N.A. control. Vincent pushed evangelism, organized a Sunday school and choir, and published a number of tracts, which favourably contributed to the image of the infant U.N.A..[16]

From the beginning Vincent showed leadership qualities and radical ideas for which he later became noted. He favoured Native dress and Yoruba names. The U.N.A. prohibited him from adopting either. Friction arose over his opposition to churching the dead and his Baptist methods of administering the sacraments, especially

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15. U.N.A. Minutes, July 31, 1893, and Aug. 9, 1895, pp. 102-3 and 174-5.
16. U.N.A. Minutes, Jan.-Aug. 1892, pp. 41-77.

baptism. The elders disliked the popularity of immersion as opposed to sprinkling. Legally both were acceptable, but the almost unanimous demand for immersion was an indication of Vincent's growing influence.[17]

Vincent sought to democratize the government. He challenged the self-constituted General Committee and agitated for trustees for the church property, which the chief elder, J.W. Cole, kept under his personal control.[18] Vincent's radicalism, his democratic view on church government, and his popularity and influence with the congregation all combined to create a challenge to the elders' control. When the question of his ordination arose, the chairman began the customary delaying tactics.

Vincent's challenge to lay authority was typical of clergy with marked qualities of leadership. Given his influence over the congregation, and a system whereby major policies were decided by the vestry, his power would have increased at the expense of the General Committee. Similar clerical challenges of elderships were repeated in 1903 and 1920.

In the early years the choice of churches in Lagos was between, either lay control with extempore prayer, immersion and the doctrine of personal "conversion,"

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17. U.N.A. Minutes, October, 1891-September 1892, pp. 26-82.
18. U.N.A. Minutes, May 1892-July 1893, pp. 65-103.

or clerical control with formal prayer, sprinkling in baptism, and belief in growth in the habits of Christian living. Vincent's later history exemplified the dilemma of a man who desired the doctrines of the first and government of the second. He returned to the Native Baptists where doctrine was congenial but lay control equally as frustrating as in the U.N.A.. A decade later he led a schism which created an organization of clerical control based upon Baptist doctrine and ceremony.[19]

After the resignation of Vincent in early 1894, three views of the clergy developed within the General Committee. J.W. Cole fearing a further challenge to lay control favoured an honorary lay ministry of the elders. D.A. Jones and E.H. Oke preferred an ordained ministry, but like Cole they wanted it Native, honorary and of the elders. H.A. Caulcrick and G.A. Williams proposed a paid ministry and suggested inviting a prominent clergyman from Sierra Leone. They feared that a Native if chosen, would be polygamous.

J.W. Cole won over Jones and Oke to an honorary lay ministry of the elders. To avoid defeat in the General Committee, Caulcrick and Williams proposed the choice be

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19. The Native Baptist elders signed an agreement with Vincent which guaranteed their authority. For the agreement and causes of the schism see: The Native Baptist Church vs. Mojola Agbebi, suit no. 59 of 1903 in the Supreme Court of the Colony of Lagos, in Coker Papers or Roberson Collection.

made by the vestry. Cole shunned setting a precedent of congregational consultation. The General Committee nominated Cole, Jones, Oke and J.O. George as ministering elders.[20] Within a year complaints arose, class attendance dropped, and membership declined. Caulcrick and Williams challenged the validity of lay sacraments and a polygamous agency. Caulcrick read a number of papers in support of a professional ministry. Williams opened a private fund to challenge Cole's monopoly of church finance and overcome his argument that the church could not afford a paid ministry.[21]

The General Committee voted in favour of a paid ministry. Cole took no action. Six months later it reaffirmed its stand. Cole still refused to move. When pushed, he threatened to resign and since he held the property, and paid over half the church expenses, the General Committee was powerless. Six months later, as the situation

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20. U.N.A. Minutes, July 30, 1894, p. 141. The U.N.A. designated these men, "chief elders". I prefer "ministering elders" since I use the term chief elders as it is customarily employed by the African churches to refer to those paramount among the elders but without power of ministerial functions.
21. U.N.A. Minutes, Jan. 25, 1895, Mar. 22/95, Oct. 11/95, Nov. 22/95 and Jan. 31/96, pp. 162, 168, 189, 194, and 202; D.A. Hughes, Charge to the U.N.A. General Conference, 1922. Since J.W. Cole paid half of the church expenses he could insure that funds were not available for a clergyman. Williams' fund was a device to demolish Cole's argument and undermine his support in the congregation. Similar tactics were employed by Dada Adeshigbin after 1917 in underming the chief elder, A. W. Thomas, of the A.C. (Bethel). See p. 329.

deteriorated, three of the ministering elders resigned. Cole was isolated.[22]

Meanwhile Caulcrick and Williams had been conducting negotiations through Blyden for the services of J.E. Fredericks, an African Methodist Episcopal clergyman in Sierra Leone. A motion was tabled in the General Committee to extend an official invitation to Fredericks. The vote was three to two in favour. Cole, acting as chairman, cast a tying vote-- a desperate device to avert an adverse vote. The deadlock was complete. Cole became passive, withholding his contributions. The church faced financial collapse. An impulsive junior leader nominated Jones as a replacement for Cole. Fortunately the motion was defeated.[23]

Cole was urged by his supporters to appeal to the congregation. Thus followed the first election to the General Committee and the precedent Cole had previously feared. Oke and Jones called on the support of Cole's pyramid and with an election cry against foreign ministers and their mistletoe rules (a probable reference to monogamy), they and Cole were overwhelmingly elected. Caulcrick, Williams, and their supporters lost their offices. The new General Committee reaffirmed Cole's position as ministering elder. He died shortly afterwards and the

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22. U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 8/95, Aug. 16/95, Nov. 29/95, Jan. 17/96 and Feb. 8/96, pp. 166, 176, 197, 200 and 204.
23. U.N.A. Minutes, May 22/96, June 11/96, pp. 216, 218.

General Committee invited Caulcrick and Williams to resume their seats. Jones was appointed temporary ministering elder and the General Committee promised to provide an ordained and professional clergy in the near future.[24]

Since Cole towered over the other elders in every way, his rule had been autocratic. The rush of changes following his death indicated that while his pyramid supported him to the last, he had lost ideological leadership to Williams and Caulcrick. The situation altered upon his death. The five remaining elders shared influence equally. The autocracy became an oligarchy. Meanwhile the precedent of congregational consultation had been set. Vestry power grew as it was called upon more frequently to settle disputes within the oligarchy.

The elders remained divided. Jones and Oke wanted Natives of the church employed as clergy. Caulcrick and Williams desired a monogamous foreigner. Correspondence was opened with Bishop Small of the African Methodists in America. Small demanded monogamy as a condition of membership and affiliation with his denomination. Monogamy had a chance on its own, but loss of U.N.A. independence was intolerable and the negotiations were closed.[25] Blyden

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24. U.N.A. Minutes, Sept. 4/96, Oct. 23/96, Oct. 30/96, May 21/97 and Nov. 5/97, pp. 221, 224, 227, 250, and 275.
25. U.N.A. Minutes, July 1897-June 1898, pp. 260-93; Hughes, Charge Delivered to the U.N.A. Conference, 1922. The A.M.E. Church of America was at the same time (contd.over)

recommended an apostolic coloured missionary in the Gold Coast who visited Lagos and ordained three local candidates, D.A. Jones, J.A. Bright, and J.G. Campbell,[26] the last two being recent candidates from outside the U.N.A. who were expected to uphold a monogamous ministry.

John O. George, the weakest of the elders and a compromise between the two factions, was elected president by the General Committee. His presidency was divided into two distinct periods 1897-1900 and 1900-1905. During the first period congregation elections followed the pattern set in 1896. The U.N.A. now possessed three churches--Ijero in Ebute Metta, Erelu among Lagos aboriginals and the mother church, Jehovah Shalom.

Upon the death of J.W. Cole in 1897 the financial base of the U.N.A. disappeared. A determined effort ensued to persuade the general membership to assume greater financial responsibility. As it proved this was possible but at

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successfully negotiating affiliation with the Ethiopian Church of South Africa. Affiliation in 1896, was followed by an enthusiasm which raised the membership to 10,000. Although American Negro, the A.M.E. was still subject to attack as a foreign organization and schisms followed. The U.N.A. did not experience either the massive inflow of members or subsequent schism. Judged however, by customary standards A.M.E. affiliation brought real benefits to the Ethiopians, such as support from the intelligentsia, which the U.N.A. was unable to claim. Sundkler, Bantu Prophets, pp. 40-41, 81 and 86.

26. Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1891-1903, p. 8; U.N.A. Minutes, Apr. 23, 1899, p. 327.

the expense of an increase in local autonomy expressed through the parish committees. Elder Williams of Jehovah Shalom attempted to halt this development, but Caulcrick at Ijero and George at Erelu (the branch churches), continued to assert their independence.[27]

In 1900 the General Committee sanctioned a trend it was unable to halt. It recognized the parish committees and instructed them to take over responsibility for the local church and school, and pay agents and teachers. They were also required to give half of the revenue they raised to the General Committee which was to pay, and have full power over the clergy.[28]

Congregational influence expressed through the parish committee continued to undermine the unstable oligarchy in the second half of George's presidency (1900-1905). In addition, the three ordained clergy were threatening to usurp the dominance of the General Committee in the affairs of the organization.[29] The clergy sought greater authority in the interests of a more vigorous evangelical programme in the interior. Campbell, like the members of of the Agege school, was a product of the revivals of the 1880's when he personally dedicated his life to God's work.

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27. U.N.A. Minutes, Oct. 15/97, Nov. 5/97, Mar. 4/98, Apr. 29/98 and Apr. 23/00, pp. 268,275,281,287, and 352.
28. U.N.A. Minutes, Apr. 23/00, June 1/00 and Aug. 10/00, pp. 352, 361 and 367.
29. U.N.A. Minutes, Apr. 23/99, May 1/02, July 25/02, pp. 327, 398, 401.

He was disturbed by the indifference of the lay leadership to evangelism.[30] As a true Evangelical, he sought to have the U.N.A. state its acceptance of polygamy which to date it had tolerated in practice, but ignored officially.

The power of the clergy grew at the expense of the elders who were divided. Even Caulcrick and Williams who customarily stood together and even now opposed Campbell's views on polygamy were estranged over the relationship between centralized control and local autonomy. But all the elders agreed on one thing-- the paramountcy of the laity. They finally united against the clerical bid for power. Fearing to challenge the clergy before the congregation, the elders suspended the general elections for three years, and returned to the earlier system of enlarging the General Committee by nomination.[31] Then unable to control the General Committee the elders created an Executive Committee of themselves and refused to convene the General Committee. During this time the elders carried the full financial burden of the organization, since the parish committees under congregational influence

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30. U.N.A. Minutes, Apr. 27/00, Sept. 24/01, pp. 355, 372, 383; "The Origin of the Building of St. Stephen's", W.A.E. Minute Book 1903-1939; Campbell, The Origin of the Thirty-six Articles of Faith, Lagos, 1945, pp. 2-3.
31. U.N.A. Minutes, Oct. 25/01, Dec. 11/03, pp. 387, 420; F.Cole to J.K. Coker, Nov. 30, 1903, Coker Papers.

were withholding their support in protest.[32]

Finally Campbell and Bright decided upon a test of strength. A new congregation had grown up under J.B. Kester at Ikorodu. The clergy repeatedly sought Kester's ordination in the interests of evangelism. The Executive Committee continued to stall, unwilling to add to clerical strength. Bright and Campbell, with a number of the Lagos laity, proceeded to Ikorodu and ordained Kester in May, 1903. The Executive Committee dismissed both Campbell and Bright and declared Kester's ordination invalid. Jones threatened to resign in protest.[33]

The suspension of the elections, the ignoring of the General Committee, the arbitrary rule of the Executive Committee, and the threat of losing all their clergy, united the opposition against the elders. In a stormy

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32. No U.N.A. Minutes recorded between April 1902 and May 1903, see U.N.A. Minute Book, pp. 401-2; Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1904-1924, p. 2; U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 3/05, pp. 440.

33. U.N.A. Minutes May 8-10 and July 10, 1903, pp. 402-7 and 408. Campbell, like Vincent, found his leadership ability hemmed in by the strictures of lay control. He might have led half of the U.N.A. membership into schism but refrained from doing so. His subsequent actions proved the sincerity of his eagerness for evangelism. He established another church (theW.A.E.) in the heart of Lagos pagandom eschewing the policy of "sheep stealing". Since he had no ready-made congregation he worked as a contractor for the money to purchase land and build a church. Campbell made absolute clerical control a cardinal principle of the W.A.E.. He believed it was essential to a denomination devoted to vigorous evangelism. Origin of the Building of St. Stephens, 1903, W.A.E. Minute Book: Campbell, Origin of the Thirty-six Articles of Faith, pp. 2-3.

general election in November, 1904, the junior leaders under Robert Williams won all the executive positions in the General Committee and either subordinated the elders or failed to re-elect them. The elders became passive and withheld their financial contributions. Soon the General Committee faced an empty treasury and financial collapse. Three months after the election the junior leaders sought reconciliation, Robert Williams admitting that,

> ... it is not natural...[for] Africans who had been appointed to a high office to be elected to a subordinate one or to be superceded during their lifetime.[34]

Through the humility of Robert Williams, the effort of the clergyman, D.A. Jones, and the forebearance of G.A. Williams, who though an elder, had continued to sit in the General Committee in a subordinate position, reconciliation was effected. Elder Oke, admitted their failings and "expressed the need for a renewal of the spirit of prayer in our leading men such as had existed in the early days of the church."[35] After two joint prayer meetings, the junior leaders stepped down and the elders resumed their former executive positions under George. Co-operative action was immediately taken to restore the unity of the church and repair its finances.

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34. U.N.A. Minutes, Dec. 16/04, March 3/05, April 6/05, pp. 437, 440, 450.
35. U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 3, 1905, p. 440.

In the following general election the elders were re-elected to the executive. G.A. Williams replaced George as president since his attitude during the young men's revolt gave him influence with both the elders and junior leaders. The new General Committee passed two resolutions to prevent a recurrence of the past troubles. It was made mandatory to convene the General Committee at least once a month and in future it would choose its own executive from the members which the congregation had elected.[36] These two measures ensured that in future the junior leaders would not be ignored and the executive would remain in the hands of the elders.

By rejecting limited clerical authority the U.N.A. turned against the most natural method of achieving organizational unity. Lay control expressed through the parish committee would eventually lead from local autonomy to local independence. The only way in which the General Committee could maintain its power was to become representative of all the local churches, but transportation and other difficulties prevented this development. Between 1905 and 1917 the power of the General Committee was further whittled away by the local churches.

A centralized organization required a financially strengthened General Committee, but Ijero church at Ebute Metta refused to support any scheme which aimed at

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36. U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 10/05, Apr. 27/06, and Aug. 10/06, pp. 464, 475, and 482.

strengthening the General Committee at the expense of the local churches. For this reason Ijero led in the development of parish committees. Ebute Metta possessed a strong local patriotism. It was a chronic complaint that Lagos ignored the sister churches. Ijero described the U.N.A. as a group of sister (and thereby equal) churches with the General Committee at its head. In contrast, Lagos, favouring more centralized control referred to Jehovah Shalom as the mother church, others as branches.[37] The mother-sister terminology was used to express the division over the degree of centralized control. It was a common argument in the African Church Movement and not confined to the U.N.A..

Ebute Metta had developed as a mission station of Lagos but Porto Novo had sought affiliation with the U.N.A. after a schism from the Methodist mission. It was itself a mother church to outstations in Dahomey. Porto Novo jealously guarded its independence believing that it was in every sense of the word, a sister church.

In 1903 the U.N.A. ordained D.H. Kukui for Porto Novo upon the recommendation of its parish committee, a privilege later denied to Ebute Metta. In 1910 Porto Novo dismissed Kukui. The General Committee divided: Lagos and the clergy believing that Porto Novo was acting too independently; Ebute Metta defending the right of local autonomy. The

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37. U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 21, 1917, pp. 179-182.

General Committee was powerless. It hesitated to force a pastor upon an unwilling congregation and transfer was impossible since there was no other French speaking priest. The outstations in Dahomey were too poor to support Kukui and the General Committee could not subsidize him. Porto Novo's action was allowed to stand, after the parish committee admitted it had acted in excess of its powers.[38] But the precedent had been set.

Kukui's fate was an illustration of the precarious position of clergymen employed by the parish committees. E.Z. Bankole offered for Porto Novo on the understanding that he be paid by the General Committee-- an example of the pressure which the clergy exerted towards centralization. Porto Novo agreed to pay an assessment to the General Committee. Through the double exchange rate from French into English and back into French currency, one quarter of the assessment was lost. Porto Novo paid half the assessment-- the half collected in English coin. Thereafter the General Committee allowed the parish committee to pay Bankole's salary. Lagos maintained the procedure was unconstitutional but under the circumstances there was no alternative.[39]

While Ebute Metta and Porto Novo resented the "mother church" theory the interior churches in need of financial

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38. U.N.A. Minutes, Dec. 31/10, Mar. 25/12, and Dec. 30/12, pp. 555, vol. ii, pp. 15 and 42.
39. U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 17/16, Oct. 27/16, and Apr. 27/17, pp. 139, 152 and 157.

help, were more willing to accept it. The Ikale churches of Southern Ondo accepted U.N.A. policy without complaint since no foreign missions were at work there and their principles of grants and assistance were unknown. But elsewhere the interior churches expected to rely upon the U.N.A. as others relied upon the C.M.S., the Wesleyans, and the African Church Organization. The Ijebu churches, upon the urging of the Superintendent (D.A. Jones) and in the interest of orthodox financing, kept all of their monies in the general fund in Lagos. The General Committee instructed Ijebu to make arrangements for the handling of their own funds since they withdrew in excess of their deposits. Ijebu was informed that "... all churches founded are expected to be self-supporting." When the Superintendent charged the Ijebu churches with insubordination the General Committee "... objected to holding our branch churches in bondage as foreign churches do...." Finally Ijebu asked to be a "mission" rather than a "church." The General Committee refused, insisting that "It is not the policy of the U.N.A. Church to take up missions...."[40]

The General Committee's sole concern was the clergy who were employed, ordained, paid and transferred at its command. The system had advantages. It developed a spirit of sturdy self-reliance in the interior, the lack of which the

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40. U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 31/05, May 3/07, Aug. 4/08, pp. 446, 493, 513.

missionaries tended to bemoan in their organizations. It encouraged individuals to accept their duty as evangelists since the organization did not formally concern itself with this aspect of the work. The result was the patronage system discussed in an earlier chapter. The development of the Porto Novo outstations indicated the success of local church and individual efforts.

There were disadvantages. Poverty in the interior meant years without a priest for many churches. Despite the ceaseless travelling of the superintendent, the U.N.A. churches received the sacraments less frequently than the missions. By 1919 the ratio of clergy to members was the lowest of any Christian organization. The slow growth of the clergy was partly the result of an excess of local feeling encouraged by Ebute Metta and Porto Novo. The General Committee was even more to blame for timidity in not ordaining vernacular agents who could have been employed at rates within the reach of the interior churches. This conservatism with regard to educational qualifications on the part of a General Committee which permitted polygamous priests appeared unusually contradictory. The Evangelicals always argued that the employment of vernacular agents might imply the ordination of polygamists. The U.N.A. policy of accepting polygamists and rejecting vernacular speakers appeared particularly senseless.

Prior to 1911 only Lagos, Ebute Metta, and Porto Novo

could afford resident priests. Superintendent D.A. Jones was responsible for administering the sacraments to Ikale, Ijebu, Ibadan, Agege, and eventually Kano. He was not paid a salary but requested that the General Committee pay his travelling expenses. A superintendent's fund was opened and the local churches assessed. The interior responded quickly.[41]

Prior to 1912 the General Committee asked for one half of the parish revenues. Ebute Metta and Porto Novo never co-operated. The success of the superintendent's fund encouraged the General Committee to set assessments according to the type of agent the local church employed. An agent's promotion partly depended upon his ability to raise his assessment. This encouraged him to build up his parish contribution to the General Committee. The system was accepted and by 1920 four interior churches were paying for priests-- Agege, Ikale, Ibadan, and Kano.[42]

Upon the assumption of the presidency by G.A. Williams in 1905, the oligarchy of five elders gradually dissolved.

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41. U.N.A. Minutes, Jan. 21/98, Aug. 11/04, Feb. 15/18 and July 5/18, pp. 277, 435, 195 and 202.
42. U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 29/12, Feb. 15/18, pp. 20, 195. In South Africa both the "African" and "Aladura" organizations have suffered endless splintering. While the African churches of Nigeria reversed this trend, the Aladura conformed to the South African pattern. Sundkler (Bantu Prophets, pp. 161-79) discusses the causes of fission in sociological terms. He does not discuss what I stress as the major causes of decentralization-- inadequacy of central finance, communication difficulties and parochialism.

Jones became superintendent and Oke removed to Ibadan. Caulcrick and George died. G.A. Williams became the chief and only elder, like J.W. Cole in the past. Like Cole he held the property deeds. Two junior leaders, T.B. Jacobs and Robert Williams occupied positions much like that held by G.A. Williams in his younger days under Cole.

Robert Williams had led the young men's revolt of 1905 which overthrew the oligarchy of the elders. Between 1905 and 1919 Williams and Jacobs agitated for a number of reforms; increased clerical staff both of priests and superintendents, a monogamous clergy, and a new constitution to democratize the organization and provide for an independent clerical authority.

The leadership of G.A. Williams was more subtle than that of J.W. Cole. He was a skilled diplomat and compromiser. His main preoccupation was to hold the U.N.A. together, to preserve its unity. How much of his manipulation of the General Committee by the various means open to him as chairman was the result of his own convictions and how much it was the result of his judgement of the mood of the church was difficult to discover. Seldom did he offer his own personal opinion. But he used all his influence to delay the reforms which Robert Williams and Jacobs proposed, including those on a monogamous clergy which he was known to personally favour. A monogamy-polygamy dispute could readily lead to division.

In 1918 D.A. Jones, the superintendent, died. According to custom, age, and experience, D.A. Hughes was the logical successor. Like Jones, he had a private income and would continue the honorary superintendency. Hughes was polygamous. Jehovah Shalom supported their young priest, G.A. Oke, for the position.[43] Both Jones and Hughes were from Ebute Metta, a church which half-heartedly supported the organization. Oke was solely dependent upon his salary and therefore likely to be amenable to General Committee control. He was a monogamist. This combination of local chauvinism, clerical subservience and polygamy created an issue capable of destroying the tenuous bonds of unity in the organization.

At the same time G.A. Oke began a magazine, The African Hope, with an editorial staff of young reformers. Robert Williams (brother-in-law), and Jacobs, in their desire to reform the polygamist ministry, backed Oke and The African Hope. The General Committee fearing the new periodical might become a militant organ of reform refused to recognize it as the official publication of the U.N.A..[44]

G.A. Williams deferred the vote on the new superintendent four times in the General Committee to avoid open

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43. G.A. Oke, Interview, Nov. 10, 1961. G.A. Oke was a nephew of Elder E.H. Oke mentioned earlier.
44. U.N.A. Minutes, Apr. 28/19, p. 247, Minute Book Board of Editors, African Hope, Jan. 18-Apr. 5, 1919, Oke Papers. Horatio A. Williams, son of Robert, was for a time editor of The African Hope.

strife.[45] Jehovah Shalom threatened to boycott a referendum. Schism appeared inevitable. Suddenly in May, 1919, G.A. Williams died. Both the clergy and elders were left leaderless. Robert Williams, the vice-president, succeeded to the chair and Jacobs became vice. They promptly appointed Hughes as superintendent and Oke as assistant superintendent[46] to guarantee his succession after Hughes' death or retirement.

Williams and Jacobs now had the opportunity to initiate the reforms for which they had been agitating. The constitution of 1891 which operated "like the Methodists" was open to the kind of manipulation which had frustrated their efforts in the past decade. A proper written constitution to limit the power of the elders and insist upon monogamy among the clergy was an urgent necessity.

G.A. Williams and the elders had placed every conceivable object in the way of the constitution. It was ten years since a drafting committee had been appointed. Presented to the General Committee in 1911, it was relegated to a review sub-committee, rejected, and again put under review. After a year in the hands of a translation committee it was sent to a lawyer who died (fortunately for the elders) and not recovered from his estate for another year.[47]

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45. U.N.A. Minutes, Mar. 3, Mar. 17, Apr. 28, May 9, 1919, pp. 234, 239, 247, 252.
46. U.N.A. Minutes, June 27, 1919, p. 265.
47. U.N.A. Minutes, Oct. 22/09, Mar. 25/11, Mar. 6/14, Jan. 22/15, Dec. 3/17, Aug. 3/18, pp. 532, 560, 72, 93, 193, 209.

The clergy favoured a new constitution because of the provision it was expected to make for independent clerical power. They had quietly asserted themselves through their Ministers Committee which had been temporarily abolished at one time for acting too independently.[48] The test of strength of 1903 when Campbell and Bright were dismissed, was a warning against haste. Over the years it became customary for the Ministers Committee to recommend candidates for holy orders. G.A. Williams permitted this delegation of power but was unwilling to give it legal force under a constitution. In 1911 precedent was set aside and over the protests of the clergy the General Committee recommended a man for priesting who subsequently failed as a minister. The Ministers Committee continued to refer to this lay misjudgement until four years later the General Committee apologized.[49] Now under a sympathetic General Committee the clergy determined to have their rights written into the constitution.

When G.A. Williams died, the constitution laid before the General Committee was a product of 1909 and entirely inadequate to the conditions of 1919. The interior churches were given no representation. On the status of local churches

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48. U.N.A. Minutes, Jan. 11/95, p. 160. The full title of the Ministers Committee was, The Ministers, Preachers and Leaders Meeting.
49. U.N.A. Minutes, Sept. 23/11, Aug. 20/15, pp. 1, 111.

it contrived to say nothing. It referred to Lagos as the mother church and all others as sisters. The Ministers Committee was given no power to recommend ordinations. Even its minor decisions were subject to a veto. It was silent on polygamy but the authorized form of Native marriage ceremony was appended.[50]

Both clergy and junior leaders had been pressing for the constitution for ten years and although it gave them less than they already possessed, it was ratified immediately after Williams' death. Both parties ignored it. The General Committee, acting within its constitutional right recommended a man for holy orders. The clergy protested and the Ministers Committee forced the General Committee to recognize its customary and prior right.[51] Ratification had been a gesture to tradition. The policy of a respected and departed elder must not be so obviously dishonoured. It was pointed out how long and arduously G.A. Williams had worked for the constitution. It had been his greatest wish that it should be his privilege to sign it. Ten years was an uncommonly long time to provide a constitution not six pages in length.

A motion of revision was tabled immediately. The real struggle ensued. Robert Williams and Jacobs aimed to give the clergy independent authority in exchange for a reform towards monogamy. The fatal mistake had been to elevate

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50. The Revised Constitution of the U.N.A. Church, Lagos, 1919.
51. U.N.A. Minutes, Jan. 16, and July 30, 1920, pp. 302, 320.

Hughes before the reform was carried out. Support among the clergy for a monogamous ministry vanished. The younger clergy, and especially G.A. Oke, were unwilling to espouse a cause so obviously in opposition to their superintendent. The African Hope opened its pages to a discussion of marriage customs, but refused to publish articles openly hostile to a polygamous ministry. The African Hope inevitably came down on the side of polygamy since J.K. Coker had financed it when the U.N.A. refused.[52] Advertized as the voice of the African Church Movement it became in fact, a vehicle of Evangelical expression.

Williams and Jacobs proposed a gradual reform. Future candidates for ordination would be and remain, men of one wife. Men already ordained should be prohibited from adding to the number of their wives. These proposals should be written into the revised constitution. Jacobs informed the General Committee in July, 1920, that he intended to move a motion of reform. It was tabled in September and after heated debate defeated, the clergy voting solidly against.[53] The same month the parish committee of Ebute Metta recommended the ordination of a polygamist which the Ministers Committee

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52. H.A. Williams to the editor, Times of Nigeria, June 6, 1921; See the African Hope, Dec. 1919 to June 1920 for a series of articles by J.K. Coker "Did God Detest Polygamy." Interview, G.A. Oke, Nov. 10, 1961.
53. U.N.A. Minutes, July 30, and Sept. 17, 1920, pp. 320 and 330.

supported. Williams and Jacobs deferred the decision three times. In February, 1921, when Williams was ill and Jacobs in the chair, the General Committee voted to accept the recommendation. Williams and Jacobs resigned.[54]

With the reform party broken, the revision of the constitution was rapidly carried forward and came into effect in October, 1921.

In a fairly lengthy foreword the U.N.A. set forth one of the best formal statements ever composed defending Evangelical views on polygamy. The repeated use of the word "tolerate" did nothing to conceal the straightforward policy of acceptance. The fact that the clergy as a separate class were not mentioned indicated U.N.A. determination to turn its back on the double standard preferred by Churchmen of the Lagos school.

The revised constitution[55] was in accord with the realities of 1921. The organization was expanded by the creation of districts (Ibadan, Ijebu, Dahomey, Ikale, Northern Nigeria) and the intention expressed of creating district

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54. U.N.A. Minutes, Nov. 22, 24, 1920 and Feb. 4, 1921, pp. 328, 340, and 343; Lagos Weekly Record, Sept. 25, 1920; R.A. Williams to the editor, Times of Nigeria, June 13, 1921; Obituary of R.A. Williams, Times of Nigeria, Oct. 10, 1921; Oke, Report of the Third Triennial Conference of the African Communion, typscript, Oke Papers; R.A. Williams to the African Communion, Nigerian Daily Herald, June 24, 1931; H.A. Williams "The U.N.A. Church Defended", Times of Nigeria, June 20, 1921.

55. Revised Constitution of the U.N.A. Church, Lagos, 1921.

or assistant superintendents for each, G.A. Oke and S. Ogunmukomi being the first two. The vote was given to members over eighteen and an earlier restriction against women holding office was abolished. The interior churches were to be represented in the General Committee by their own elected delegates. The power of the General Committee was curtailed by the right of appeal to an Annual Conference which was to be the supreme authority for the organization.

Clerical authority was strengthened by the addition of an entirely new stream of authority controlled by the clergy parallel to the lay stream already in existence. Prior to this the General Committee would never admit that there was any real difference in the church between matters spiritual and matters secular. By the constitution of 1921 spiritual and secular affairs were separated each under its own stream of authority. Both streams merged at the top in the General Conference. The exclusively clerical bodies, the Leaders Committee in the parish, the Ministers Committee in the district, and the Ecclesiastical Board for the organization, handled ordination and discipline of the clergy subject to appeal to the Conference. On the secular side was the parish committee at the local level, the District Councils, and the General Committee for the whole organization.

The symbols of lay control, chairman of the parish committee and the General Committee remained unchanged but the new body, the District Council, was chaired by the

assistant superintendent. This clerical intrusion into the secular side was of considerable importance since the District Councils elected the interior representatives to the General Committee. In Lagos and Ebute Metta no District Council was created. Their representatives continued to be elected directly by the membership.

The temporary control over the General Committee which the clergy gained in 1921 as a result of the confusion among the laity gave them the opportunity to draw up and have ratified a constitution which provided for enhanced clerical power. But the change, great as it was, did not represent a fundamental switch of authority. Lay control was a cardinal principle of the U.N.A.. Not even the radicals would have favoured clerical authority. Under the revised constitution ultimate authority rested with the conference-- a predominately lay body. In any dispute between the Ecclesiastical Board and the General Committee the Conference could be expected to support the lay body, especially since the president of the Committee was also chairman of the Conference.

The clergy were subjected to the most searching criticism before the Conference. They rarely emerged unscathed. The laity condemned them for the moral state of the parish, the meagre increase in membership, the failure to visit and the slow progress of the parish schools. The clergy maintained that their humiliating positions and poor stipends deterred men of stature from choosing the U.N.A. ministry as a

vocation. Such men chose the African Church Organization where they were given positions of respect and influence and not subjected to an annual humiliation by the laity.

The U.N.A. of 1922 was a vastly different organization from what it had been in 1919. The revised constitution was in advance of present needs but it set forth the goal towards which the church was moving. The assessment system was providing a more stable financial arrangement. The decentralizing tendencies had been arrested by the representation of all areas on the General Committee, the assistant superintendents and the Annual Conference. The clerical staff corresponded to the church's needs. More authority had been granted to the clergy which made them less servants of the organization and more co-partners, albeit junior partners with the laity.

Only on marriage customs had the U.N.A. turned against the progressive policy. Toleration of polygamy expressed by a monogamous clergy and polygamous laity was a progressive policy with firm scriptual base. It was a flexible policy which could neither be accused of making marriage custom a prerequisite of salvation nor standing in the path of social change. Acceptance of polygamy, besides ignoring St. Paul's advice for a monogamous clergy, projected an unprogressive image of an attempt to preserve something which in places at least, was outdated.

Unfortunately the clergy were unwilling to accept the

gradual reform proposed in 1920. The whole African Church Movement had watched the progress of the debate within the U.N.A. with keen attentiveness. The divergent policy of the U.N.A. towards polygamy became the greatest single obstacle to organic union of the African churches.

The history of the U.N.A. was a story of compromise from its foundation meeting which brought together Anglican and Methodist laymen who employed a Baptist as their first pastor. In ceremony, it used the Anglican form on Sunday morning and the Methodist on Sunday evening. It tolerated both sprinkling and immersion in baptism. Often the compromise was achieved after prolonged negotiations. It took eight years to decide upon an ordained clergy, twenty-eight to produce a constitution, and thirty to lay down a policy on marriage.

The elders maintained their control by possession of the property, substantial financial contributions and manipulation of the procedure of the General Committee. Upon the death of Elder Cole, the property deeds were passed to G.A. Williams, chief elder of the following decades. The arbitrary action of the oligarchy prior to 1904, was possible because it underwrote the total expense of the General Committee. Twice withheld subscriptions were effective-- to block a paid ministry in 1896 and following the Young Men's Revolt in 1904. Elder Cole was clumsy and heavy handed in manipulation of the Committee. Williams'

ten-year delay of the constitution indicated his superior skill.

Turmoil and confusion resulted from the void in the leadership at the elder's death in 1897 and again in 1919. On both occasions an oligarchy or co-operative circle of junior leaders produced a rush of changes or "reforms" for which they had long been agitating. Their impatience, political immaturity and inexperience in manipulation lost them the confidence of the vestry. They could not, like the elders, rely upon solid pyramids of support in the congregations. The result was the rising prominence of the clergy.

The weakness of lay leadership invited the clergy to strengthen their position. Campbell and Bright failed in 1903 but Hughes was more successful after 1919. Since it was axiomatic that strong eldership produced decentralization, the clergy gained some support by their ability to arrest this trend.

The vestry was twice a decisive factor in policy. In 1896 it supported Cole and eliminated his opposition. In 1904 it defeated the oligarchy and elected the young men. Customarily the vestry pursued compromise but stopped short of imposing a settlement by unseating prominent elders. After the elections of 1896 and 1904 compromise was effected and the defeated parties resumed their original positions. The "stepping down" of the young men in 1905 was the kind of compromise gesture which won universal support.

Vestry pressure favoured local autonomy in disputes between the parish and general committees. Local autonomy was the natural result of provincialism, distance and costly communications. The U.N.A. barely succeeded in overcoming these difficulties. Had the colonial government consciously or unconsciously added to them, multiplication of independent churches from the common U.N.A. origin would have followed. Where colonial governments in other parts of Africa were not as disinterested, African churches were less successful in developing organizations which held the allegiance of members over large geographic areas.

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It was symbolic of the difference between the U.N.A. and African Church Organization that while the former took thirty years to formulate its policy on polygamy, the latter took six months. The problems which faced both organizations were the same. Their manner of solution could not have been more dissimilar. It was difficult to believe that these churches operated in the same society, in the same decades, and one block apart in the same city. The African Church Organization was created out of the most energetic section of the most dynamic C.M.S. church in Lagos-- St. Pauls Breadfruit. Its homogeneity was a disadvantage. It had not the experience in self-government which the Methodists and Baptists brought to the U.N.A..

Its dynamism was its downfall. In the first four years of its existence the African Church sought to solve all its problems: establish a ministry, ratify a constitution, define the status of the local churches, and codify its attitude to polygamy. The result of this speed was a four-way division.

Within the leadership the same groups appeared-- the elders and junior leaders-- fulfilling similar roles as in the U.N.A.. The two most prominent elders were J.K. Coker and A.W. Thomas.

J.K. Coker (1865-1945) was the eldest son among the twenty-eight children of Ajobo Coker, the Jaguna of Iporo and prosperous cotton farmer of Abeokuta who had begun an import-export business in Lagos in 1870. James Johnson was the formative influence and instrument of Coker's conversion in the revivals of the 1880's. Coker appeared unaffected by Crowther, but he bore for Johnson affection verging on reverence. It was Johnson's influence which caused Coker to pause in the secession from Breadfruit in 1901. When Tugwell pushed the disaffected out of St. Pauls the schism placed the two friends, Coker and Johnson, in mutually hostile organizations. The friendship survived the schism. Bishop Johnson wistfully preached the reunion of Christendom while Coker managed Johnson's farm at Agege and made his annual contribution to the endowment fund which he firmly

believed a futile effort the C.M.S. would never honour.[56]

By 1901 Coker was managing his father's estate. In 1903 he placed the Lagos business under his brother John, and went to Abeokuta to oversee the cotton farm. Ajobo died the following year leaving valuable property but little liquid capital. All of the family responsibilities (seventeen children were minors) fell on Coker's shoulders. After the settlement of the will, he placed the cotton farm in the charge of another brother, Ben, and returned to Lagos to find that John had run the business into £2,000 debt for which the three European firms, McIver, Miller Brothers and John Holt were suing him. By financial acrobatics and borrowing from the African merchants, J.H. Doherty and A.W. Thomas, he arranged satisfactory terms of repayment. Coker then turned to his Agege plantation to make it produce. By 1910 he was out of debt. Beginning in 1912 and continuing until 1920, Coker became a very wealthy man. The commodity prices crisis of 1921 again almost ruined him.[57]

A.W. Thomas (1856-1924) was born in Oyo, his father was a close relative of the Alafin (the paramount ruler of the Yorubas). He was baptized by D. Hinderer, the pioneer missionary in Ibadan where he received his early education.

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56. J.K. Coker, "The African Church", African Hope, Mar. 1922; J.K. Coker, "Diary and Account Book, 1905-07, and J.K. Coker to the editor, 1916?; Coker Papers.
57. Coker's statement in Supreme Court, suit no. 93 of 1906, J.K. Coker to my lawyer, 1906?, A. Folarin to J.K. Coker, Dec. 11, 1922, Coker Papers.

He first became a mercantile clerk and then joined the civil service. Finding favour with Governor Moloney he rose to become Deputy Registrar of the Supreme Court. He accumulated wealth, and visited England. He was a member of the Lagos elite, and a worshipper at Christ Church. He educated two of his sons as lawyers. His daughter married one of the wealthiest men of Lagos.

Thomas' influence was the result of the prestige of his birth and his position among the Lagos elite. J.W. Cole was the only other of this class to join the African Church Movement. Thomas used his wealth in the accepted manner to create a following within the church. He built himself a large residence, Ebun House, decorated with fine plaster work by the Brazilian craftsman, Balthazar. In 1915, he won the auction contract to dispose of the German assets from the Cameroons. Thereafter, he spent £2,000 on the building of Bethel African Church in the heart of Lagos.[58]

Thomas and Coker were the two wealthiest men in the African Church. The peaks of their affluence came at different times-- Thomas' before 1916, Coker's after. Both suffered severely in the economic crisis of 1921. There the similarity ended. Thomas was in commerce, Coker in agriculture. The former was of the city and enjoyed the society of the elite, while the latter was of the country

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58. Deniga, African Leaders, pp. 31-3; N.S. Miller, "The Beginnings of Modern Lagos", Nigeria Magazine, Aug. 1961, pp. 110 and 163; Macmillan, Red Book, pp. 103-04.

and mocked the elite's artificiality. Thomas was a "civilized African," Coker gloried in being "an African."[59] In the church, they were protagonists of two extreme views. Thomas was the conservative Churchman, Coker, the radical Evangelical.

In 1901 Coker emerged as chief of the founders of the African Church and principal elder at thirty-five years of age. He financed the litigation in the St. Judes property case, but his financial limitations prevented it from reaching the Privy Council. Then came his difficulties, his absence in Abeokuta, bankruptcy and dissension in the family over the settlement of the estate.

Thomas was not an original seceder. In the beginning he had been hostile to the African Church, but through the influence of Coker, he was persuaded to seek membership. Thomas' prestige and wealth led him to usurp Coker's position after 1905 when Coker was forced to seek his financial assistance. It seems likely that Thomas propounded lay control and local autonomy from conviction. But in any case these issues provided him with a popular ideological base from which to challenge Coker.

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59. The leading Anglican member of the Lagos elite referred to Coker as an "obscure person," "pseudo politician," and "farmer" who gives us "the impression of a chimpanzee at the zoo." Nigerian Pioneer, Dec. 5, 1919. An African Churchman replied that the editor of the Pioneer and his associates did not know Coker because he was not an attendant at Government House, ballroom concerts, lodge rooms and race meetings. Coker's retort was characteristic. "I am proud of it." O.T. Somefun to the Standard, Dec. 9, 1919; J.K. Coker to the editor, Dec. 9, 1919, Coker Papers.

From the beginning Coker and Thomas held opposing views. It became evident that the disagreements indicated a fundamental cleavage of beliefs and aims between two distinct schools of thought. As the junior leaders lined up behind the two elders, the line of division emerged of what later distinguished Churchmen from Evangelicals. On marriage customs where they agreed upon the dual standard, it later became apparent that their motives were different. Churchmen tolerated polygamy as an expedient. To Evangelicals it was the first step towards full acceptance. As each decision was taken there was an exodus of members back to the C.M.S.. Between 1905 and 1907 the two groups hardened. Compromise became steadily more difficult, and finally impossible.

The "sign of the cross" dispute has been discussed in another context.[60] It was the first issue to divide Coker and Thomas and although settled amicably some of the Thomists (notably Dawodu and Oguntolu) were unhappy with the decision. The arbitrary action of the clergy during the dispute left a legacy of ill-will which was apparent when J.S. Williams and S.A. Coker requested consecration.

Many opposed the creation of an episcopate. It was an unbridled bishop who had pushed them out of Breadfruit. It was ecclesiastical tyranny against which they protested

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60. See above p. 232.

in the Anglican Church. Two weeks of fierce dispute ended in a compromise whereby superintendents or presbyter bishops were to be created-- a careful distinction being drawn between the powers of presbyter bishops and the historic bishops of the apostolic succession. Coker and Williams were elevated. The creation of two superintendents, one from Lagos and one from Ebute Metta, indicated that Lagos domination, as in the U.N.A., was already as issue in Ebute Metta. Three were ordained: D.C. Coates for Bethel, J.A. Lakeru for Jehovah Jireh (Ebute Metta) and A.O. Ijaoye for Ijebu.[61]

The U.N.A. governing authority began as a committee of the founders. In the African Church the General Committee was composed at first of all those who wished to attend. It included a number classed as sympathizers, who had not broken from the C.M.S.. When St. Judes joined it was given a representation of six which was the first limitation on the General Committee's amorphous form. By 1903 when the secession had become a schism the sympathizers were less welcomed. They were expected to take a stand. Particularly those who wished to "distinguish the camp" became hostile to the C.M.S. influence which the sympathizers brought to bear. At Easter, 1903, sympathizers were allowed to attend

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61. A.C.(Bethel), Conference Proceedings 1901-1908, p. 81; J.K. Coker, The First Five Years of the A.C. 1901-1906, Coker Papers; S.A. Coker, Three Sermons on the Christian Ministry, London, 1904.

the General Committee on invitation only.[62] This action was logical but it was a blow to Thomas, for those with C.M.S. ideas were his natural allies. However, it removed a fluid element. Those who remained could more readily be brought within the elders' pyramids. The lines were hardening.

As early as 1902 Bethel organized a parish committee elected by the membership. The General Committee instructed that it should "appoint officers and agents and maintain them." Bethel interpreted this so as to give the broadest local autonomy and to include the clergy. The General Committee claimed that was not its intention.[63] The parish committee became a stronghold of the Thomists who used it to place a brake on what they considered the radicalism of the General Committee.

An example of this radicalism was the inclusion of women members in the General Committee and the appointment of a deaconess. Here again was an Evangelical triumph considered scandalous by Churchmen. The women tended to be traditionalists who would ordinarily have been Thomists. For example, they had opposed tampering with the sign of the cross. But Coker had scored another victory. The women enthusiastically supported this innovation.

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62. Coates vs. Thomas and others, Chief Justice Record Book, vol. 41, Oct.-Nov. 1904, p. 400 and vol. 42, Nov. 1905-Jan. 1906, pp. 29-44.
63. See Judgement of Chief Justice Nicol in A.C.(Salem) Conference Report, 1907, pp. 35-43.

In 1904 the Thomists sought to promote a constitution. They designed it to attract widespread support. It proposed to provide lay control by the appointment of a lay president and lay chairman of the parish and General Committee as in the U.N.A.. It provided for equal representation popularly elected for Lagos and Ebute Metta, an attractive item in the latter city. Coker's party and the clergy combined in their own interests. In the compromise the Thomists gained one significant concession-- the popular election of all lay delegates to the General Committee.[64]

The first election to the General Committee was a trial of strength between Coker and Thomas. Coker had a number of advantages. He had the prestige which followed him throughout his life of being chief of the founders of of the African Church. He had gathered around himself a group of talented young men devoted to creating a church worthy of the race. He had the support of the clergy. But Coker was not then the wealthy man he later became. His supporters more resembled a co-operative circle than a pyramid. Finally his bankruptcy and the division within his own family weakened his hold over the "hangers-on." Coker faced this popular test of strength with little but the force of his ideas. The past policies of the General Committee (which were his policies) had each in turn alienated sections of the membership. The election was a test

64. Coates vs. Thomas and others, Chief Justice Record Book, vol. 41, pp. 400-14 and vol. 43, pp. 1-9; J.K. Coker to Ajasa, 1905?, Coker Papers.

of their popularity.

Over the previous four years Thomas had used his wealth to build himself a solid pyramid of support in Bethel. He added to this his personal conviction that Coker was steadily abandoning the principles which had inspired the organization's birth-- an enhanced place for the laity in the church, local autonomy, and an end to bishops and their tyranny.

The elections were held at Easter, 1905. The Thomists, some vaguely threatening to remove Bethel from under the General Committee swept into all offices of the church. In the first flush of victory they set up a special Interior Committee charged with managing the evangelistic activities of Bethel Church. It behaved like a General Committee and was accused of schism. Bethel vestry repudiated the Interior Committee and dismantled it. This encouraged Coker and the Clergy to believe that the Thomists had gone too far and lost the support of the church.

The miscalculation led Coker to take the first illegal step which culminated in a flood of illegality so complicated that legal argument could not possibly untangle the confusion. Coker and his supporters refused to vacate their General Committee seats for the newly elected Thomists.

Thomas claimed Coker was creating another form of Anglican oppression. Coker was as firmly convinced that Thomist policies were designed to reproduce the impotence of the U.N.A. in the African Church.

The whole church became involved.[65] The bitterness of feeling surpassed anything before or after in the African Church Movement. There was no alternative to Coker or Thomas-- no one big enough to command respect. The clergy were too involved on Coker's side. The elder concept was in direct opposition to the majority principle. It was as useless for Coker to stand in the way of majority opinion as it was for Thomas to believe he could replace Coker and set him aside as chief elder.

An outside attempt at mediation, led by M.L. Stone of the Baptists and assisted by U.N.A., C.M.S., and Methodist laymen, failed. Both Thomas and Coker agreed to it, but although Thomas with his wealth could impose a settlement on his party, Coker in his financial difficulties was no longer the leader, but the spokesman for his supporters who repudiated the arbitration. After this initial setback the arbiters retired.

The Thomists used the parish committee to govern Bethel.

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65. The whole story of the crisis is told from one side in A.C.(Bethel) Conference Proceedings 1901-1908 and from the other side in A.C.(Salem) Conference Report 1907. The latter prints a number of important documents and letters. Coates vs. Thomas and Others, Chief Justice Record Book, wols. 41-43; From the Coker Papers the following, a) Testimohy by A.W. Thomas n.d.; A.O. Ijaoye to the Superintendents. Sept. 1905; J.K. Coker to Ajasa re. C.C. Cole 1905?; J.K. Coker's testimony 1905?; O.T. Somefun to J.K. Coker, Sept. 5, 1905. D.J. Sorinolu to J.K. Coker, Aug. 7, 1905; Campbell, "Something We Ought to Take Note Of" Times of Nigeria, Aug. 29, 1921.

The General Committee attempted to control the parish committee through the minister, D.C. Coates, in his capacity as chairman. The parish committee invited A.O. Ijaoye, a deacon, working in Ijebu, to replace Coates as pastor. Coates was suspended and then dismissed. He ignored the dismissal and continued to officiate in the church.

Force replaced political manoeuvring. With a police posse outside, Coates forced himself into the church. He was thrown from the chancel as Ijaoye entered. The Sidesmen carried him bodily out the main door. The congregation divided into fighting factions ending when Coker's party escaped through the windows. The Thomists assaulted the women who retaliated, marching through the streets of Lagos singing songs of condemnation of Thomas and the anti-feminists. The African Church never recovered from the damage done to its prestige. It was hardly an enviable image of African leadership.

Violence was followed by a long series of lawsuits by and against the pastor, D.C. Coates, to determine whether the parish committee or General Committee held the power of dismissal. The court ultimately ruled that the basic cause of the establishment of the church had been the forcing of an unwanted clergyman upon an unwilling congregation. Since the church had not adopted a constitution the congregation had not delegated its authority to choose

or dismiss its clergyman to either the parish committee or the General Committee, the congregation must still make its decision regarding Coates.

Violence again flared as both the parish committee and General Committee sought to get a favourable verdict from the congregation. The General Committee disconnected the Thomists from membership. The parish committee retaliated against Coker's party. Fisticuffs developed at the door of the vestry meetings over which membership cards were valid. The result was vestry resolutions for and against Coates according to whom had convened and chaired the meeting. Case followed case before the courts, Coker financing one, Thomas the next. Anonymous threats against life were made, adverse resolutions not recorded and minute books disappeared.

After an unsuccesful scramble to purchase the leased property on which Bethel was built, Coates and Coker locked the building and took the keys. The Thomists broke it open, changed the locks and slept in the building. The Thomists finally prevailed. The court ruled that Coates had been properly dismissed by the Bethel vestry. Superintendent S.A. Coker and D.C. Coates withdrew with the minority and formed Zion Church a few blocks from Bethel.

The General Committee virtually ceased to function for a year. In 1907 the Ebute Metta church which had remained neutral during the crisis instructed its pastor, J.A. Lakeru,

to call a reconciliation conference of all the churches of the organization. Bethel refused to attend. Dominated by Coker's party the conference organized the A.C. (Salem) under a constitution which gave ultimate authority to the clergy. An abortive mediation attempt by the interior delegates failed. The Thomists had already moved to call a rival conference which organized the A.C. (Bethel). This conference ratified the constitution of 1904 and under the influence of the extremists led by T.B. Dawodu, eliminated the last vestige of clerical influence and defined local autonomy in terms of absolute independence.

Jehovah Jireh Church of Ebute Metta had remained neutral to prevent division. Its attempt at reconciliation had resulted in the creation of two African church organizations which forced them to take a decision. The church divided peacefully. Since Jehovah Jireh was a temporary structure both the majority under the pastor J.A. Lakeru and the minority under T.B. Dawodu left to form new churches. The majority formed Salem which affiliated with Zion in Lagos and supported the A.C. (Salem). The minority formed Bethlehem and joined Lagos Bethel to support the A.C. (Bethel).[66]

Both organizations made strenuous efforts to gain the

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66. A.C.(Bethel), Conference Proceedings 1901-1908; A.C.(Salem) Conference Report, 1907.

allegiance of the interior churches. Delegations on tour argued their respective philosophies which provided an education in church government to the less sophisticated interior. Both new constitutions offered the interior churches direct representation on their General Committees, a step in advance of any of the other African churches.

The delegations offered an excellent opportunity for the interior to ventilate its peculiar grievances which had nothing to do with laity versus clergy. The delegations were thoroughly reproved for the image of African leadership which their childish behavior in Lagos was projecting to the interior. The result had been a steady loss of membership to the C.M.S.. What did the pros and cons of laity and clergy mean to the interior churches which had no clergy? They had not seen a superintendent in the past three years. The interior was becoming tired of what one church described as adultery, "from one husband to another," from the C.M.S. to Bethel, from Bethel to Salem.[67]

Many churches sullenly refused to attend either of the rival conferences. They listened to the competing delegations and refused to declare for either. This mood was a warning that repeated crises of leadership would forfeit any claim which Lagos had to leadership. The interior's reaction had a sobering influence.

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67. J.J.S. Nicol to J.K. Coker, Mar. 7, 1907; Nicol to J.K. Coker, Apr. 19, 1907; J.A. Daniel to J.K. Coker, July 15, 1907, Coker Papers.

The decision of the interior rested upon two considerations-- the attractiveness of local autonomy under the Bethel constitution as against the hope of financial support under the constitution of Salem. On this basis the stronger joined Bethel and the weaker, Salem. The cities chose Bethel, the villages, Salem. Fortunately the organizations did not foment schism and accepted the majority decision in all but one case.

Coker's party had been called the minister's party. Coker with some justification denied this. Of the five clergy, only Lakeru and Coates joined the A.C. (Salem). Superintendent J.S. Williams and the deacon, Ijaoye, stayed with the A.C. (Bethel). Superintendent S.A. Coker set up his own organization.

Both A.C. (Bethel) and A.C. (Salem) drew up constitutions in 1907. In the A.C. (Bethel) the General Committee dominated by the laity held wide theoretical powers. But since the parishes paid their clergy the General Committee held power over the superintendents only. By 1921 the local churches were raising £4,000 a year out of which they paid a two and a half percent assessment. This provided the General Committee with a yearly budget of around £100. The central authority was so weak that the A.C. (Bethel) might have been accurately described as a confederation of churches. Section six reflected the spirit of the constitution. The individual churches shall be:

> ... independent, self-governing, self-supporting and self-extending, making their own arrangements, raising their own funds, controlling their own finances, appointing and dismissing their ministers, ordained or unordained.[68]

In contrast the General Committee of the A.C. (Salem) was the most powerful body in the organization with an annual budget around £1,000, responsible for the salaries of all the clergy and half of the expenses of evangelism.[69] Combined with the power of the superintendent over matters spiritual, the result was a highly centralized organization.

In this regard the A.C. (Salem) was unique in the African Church Movement. It faced unique problems. Since evangelism was half financed by the General Committee the organization was carrying out what appeared to be a missionary programme. Providing the finances inevitably led to charges of interfering with local autonomy, of promoting mission-churches held in bondage, and of behaving as a foreign society.

The A.C. (Salem) carefully drew the distinction between mission-churches and their own system of dependent-churches. "To nurse to independence" was a favourite slogan. The nursing often appeared like prodding. Like the U.N.A. Ijebu churches which asked to be classed as "missions," the interior welcomed financial assistance in the early

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68. A.C. (Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 15, 1921, iii, pp. 223-227: "The Constitution for the General Government of the African Church [Bethel] Conference Proceedings 1901-1908, pp. 10 and 39.
69. The General Committee in Account with J.K. Coker, 1916, Coker Papers.

years. There came a time when finance became the secondary, and local autonomy the primary aim. Customarily the dependent period lasted less than ten years, after which they were thrown on their own resources. If the church collapsed, the town was abandoned. Surprisingly few collapsed.

Critics of the foreign societies usually agreed that there was nothing basically wrong with the mission system except that that the period of tutelage and dependence was far too long. The African churches however, challenged the whole idea and tended to be critical of even a ten year period. Christianity either spread by conviction or by money. The A.C. (Salem) policy of bolstering conviction by even a little money was a denial of the principle. The implication was that if Salem had the resources of the foreign societies it would mix God and Mamman for longer and longer periods.

The A.C. (Salem) countered its critics by declaring that the organization had a duty to bring the sacraments to its members and teach them to read the scriptures in the vernacular. This was no less a duty because they were unable to pay for these services. The vital test was that the local church could at any moment it felt oppressed, pick up its material possessions and join another organization.[70]

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70. A.C. (Salem) Minutes, Feb. 10, 1919, iv, pp. 172-8: Circular, July 14, 1925, Coker Papers

None had done so, although some had joined the A.C. (Salem) because of neglect by other African churches.

The question of raising adequate central finances had not been solved by the U.N.A.. The A.C. (Bethel) followed the U.N.A. pattern. What success A.C. (Salem) achieved was due first to the evangelistic fervour which that organization was able to maintain, and second, to the smooth working of its leadership. Nothing had such an adverse effect upon central income as strife within the General Committee.

Between 1907 and 1910 the coastal churches paid subscriptions to the general fund to defray the cost of the superintendent's visits to the interior churches. By 1913 all of the local churches were paying regularly into this fund. Between 1913 and 1915 Associations for Evangelism were formed in all the churches, some of which accepted the financial liability for specific dependent churches.[71] Prior to 1914 the general fund for clerical salaries had been collected by a system whereby the local churches remitted one quarter of their collections. In 1914 this was changed as in the U.N.A. to fixed assessments, in order that the General Committee had some idea of its budget for planing purposes. The response from the churches was

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71. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Sept. 19, 1910, Apr. 8/13, May 6/13, Jan. 12/14, June 8/15, June 26/17, ii, pp. 81, 141, 143, 160 and iv, pp. 31 and rough minutes in Coker Papers.

satisfactory. The General Committee paid the clergy and nine unordained evangelists.

Between 1914 and 1917, inflation and the rapid increase in membership in the interior caused the first real financial crisis. More money and inadequate funds became a preoccupation of the General Committee. In 1917 the General Committee took drastic action by ruling that only subscribing members could vote in elections and that agents must supply lists of members and the amount of their subscriptions to the General Committee. Furthermore, churches not paying at least £15 a year were threatened with the loss of their school teacher. The General Conference of 1917 was shocked at these tactics and recommended that the General Committee hold its 1918 budget to the 1917 level.[72]

The stringent economic measures produced a mild revolt in the Abeokuta district where the African Church had been making phenomenal progress between 1916 and 1920. The churches of Abeokuta rather peremptorily announced their intention to form a District Council to organize and finance evangelism in the Abeokuta district.

Instead of charging Abeokuta with insubordination, J.K. Coker persuaded the General Committee to accept the District Councils with good grace, and to formulate a constitution to guide this handing over of General Committee

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72. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Aug. 13/17 and Jan. 21/18, iv, pp. 102 and 113.

power. The Council was to be under the chairmanship of the superintendent or senior minister. It would include all ministers and agents and two to four delegates from each local church. It would have authority over all unordained agents and education. It would make recommendations to the General Committee with regard to the clergy. The District Council was to control all finances raised by dependent churches within its area of jurisdiction. The General Committee by this innovation was turning over its evangelistic activity to the local churches where they were financially able to bear the responsibility. In new areas the General Committee continued to act as the major source of finance and inspiration. The strength of the tendency to decentralize and the intensity of local feeling was exemplified by the popularity of the District Council. Within a year three more had been formed-- in Akoko, Ilaro and Ekiti.[73]

The District Councils were supposed to lift the financial burden from the general fund. But the General Committee's budget continued to rise as the statistics below indicate. These figures show the part of the budget

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73. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, May 8/17, Jan. 21/18, Nov. 19/18, iv, pp. 93, 113, 161: J.K. Coker, Constitution of the A.C. District Councils; Sodeinde to J.K. Coker, n.d. 1917; Minutes of the Second Meeting of the Ekiti District Council Oct. 2, 1918. Sodeinde to J.K. Coker, Oct. 30, 1918, and Report of the Work of the General Committee for 1917, Coker Papers.

raised by the church. The main financial support came from patrons. For example, in 1916 the church-raised budget totalled £409. J.K. Coker personally added £757 to raise the central fund to £1,166. The dependence of the church upon the planter patrons of Agege was a source of weakness. The collapse of primary produce in 1921 bankrupted the planters and destroyed the elaborate structure of the A.C. (Salem).

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Budget of the G.C. of the A.C. (Salem) raised by Assessments					
1914	1915	1916	1918	1919	1920
£293	£222	£409	£504	£660	£720

In contrast with the U.N.A., the history of the African Church was one of confusion. In the U.N.A., crises developed slowly. The issues were clear and the leadership moved within defined constitutional limits. In the African Church all the issues exploded between 1905-1907. The leadership was unstable and the line blurred between constitutional and unconstitutional behavior.

The schism of 1901 had been in the nature of a young men's revolt against the elders of Breadfruit. Secession had been unpremeditated and Coker almost in surprise, found

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74. Proceedings of the Ninth General Conference of the African Church (Salem) December 1916, Lagos, 1917; The General Committee in account with J.K. Coker 1916, Coker Papers; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Apr. 13, 1915, Oct. 22/18, June 30/19, Feb. 16/20, iv, pp. 28, 155, 197, 233.

himself its leader. Had A.W. Thomas been among the seceders he would naturally have become their chief elder. By the time he joined, Coker enjoyed the prestige which surrounded his title, "chief of the founders." His replacement required delicate manoeuvring. It might have been facilitated if he and Thomas had shared similar ideologies.

Neither by age (thirty-six in 1901) nor wealth was Coker prepared for eldership. He possessed little capital and after his bankruptcy, none. Thus, unlike J.W. Cole he did not hold the property deeds. Passive membership and withheld subscriptions were not weapons he could use. He was, in fact, a brilliant junior leader with radical ideas, personal charm, and ceaseless energy unparalleled among African Church laymen. But like the younger men of the U.N.A., he lacked political maturity, and the art of manipulation and compromise. His appeal to the civil courts against his fellow members (a grievous sin in African eyes) lost him the sympathy of the uncommitted. Leadership of a co-operative circle rather than a pyramid compelled him to assume rigid postures. The refusal of the circle to abide by the arbitration he had accepted, embarassed him and brought his word into question.

The crisis was complicated by the action of the clergy in using the confusion among the laity to enhance their prestige and power. They sacrificed their impartiality for Coker's support. The Thomists retaliated by limiting

their influence. Superintendent J.S. Williams, possibly because of his maturer years, was the only one to remain neutral and impartial. Had the clergy imitated him they might have achieved their objective in the role of mediators.

The first general election at Easter, 1905, was a rebuke to Coker. The vestry momentarily turned away from its conciliatory role. It immediately indicated its repentence by rebuffing the Thomists (at Coker's request) by dismantling the Interior Committee they had created as a rival to the General Committee. Coker did not reciprocate the gesture but turned to the civil courts hoping to get a legal judgement based on Anglican custom and procedure. The courts, however, ruled in favour of the majority principle requesting the vestry to pronounce a verdict totally out of keeping with its normal role. Neither party accepted the majority principle. So followed the violence as both factions sought legally and illegally to procure a vestry decision. Once Thomas had been vindicated a gesture of conciliation would have prevented division and won him universal applause. He chose not to make the gesture.

The crisis encouraged the desire for local autonomy, and introduced the "mother-sister argument" to the organization. Thomas championed the parish committee and local autonomy, against the central authority. Furthermore, it was not surprising that the crisis aggravated jealousy and suspicion between Lagos and Ebute Metta-- a significant

factor in U.N.A. history as well. In the division they chose opposite organizations. Lagos became the headquarters of the A.C. (Bethel), Ebute Metta of the A.C. (Salem). When new constitutions were drawn up, both found it necessary to guarantee local autonomy to woo the interior churches.

Decentralization in the A.C. (Bethel) (to be discussed later) was a marked trend in the next decade. The A.C. (Salem), through the independent churches' theory, maintained a strong central authority. In essence the interior submitted to Lagos direction as long as that city carried the financial burden. The moment it grew beyond the resources of Lagos alone and the wealthier interior churches were requested to assist, they pressed for decentralization. Rather than share the burden of the rising budget, the Annual Conference froze central expenditure in 1918. If the interior churches were to contribute more for the spread of the organization they preferred to do it through local bodies. The District Councils resulted, initiated not unnaturally by the wealthiest interior church-- Abeokuta.

Even before the African Church was fully established in 1902, the Lagos Standard, (G.A. Williams of the U.N.A.) called for the co-operation of the St. Paul's secessionists with the U.N.A. to form a national church. Blyden supported the proposal and others suggested an amalgamation of the

African churches of West Africa, to be arranged at a conference in Cape Coast. A church union committee was set up in Lagos.[75]

Mojola Agbebi was the only leader of sufficient intercolonial stature to lead an amalgamated church. In December, 1902, he was quest speaker at the African Church organization's first anniversary. During his lecture he replied to Blyden and the Lagos Standard by describing the amalgamation as a non-essential which could bide its time. Agbebi reflected the views of his own organization-- Ebenezer Baptist-- which had never considered itself an African church. Furthermore, Agbebi had just created a Baptist union embracing independent Baptists from Sierra Leone to the Cameroons.[76] Baptist principles were important to Agbebi. They would be lost in an amalgamation. For the moment his anniversary lecture dashed the hopes of the promoters.

A year later the U.N.A. and African Church were still talking of "our intended purpose to amalgamate."[77] But schisms were more popular than unions. Two in 1903 followed by three in the crisis of 1905-1907 produced seven warring

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75. Lagos Standard, Feb. 19/02 and Aug. 6/02: Theophile, "Exodus from Spiritual Bondage", Standard, Apr. 9/02; Letter from Sierra Leone to Agbebi July 9/02 in the Standard, Aug. 27/02.
76. Agbebi, "Inaugural Sermon", Conference Proceedings 1901-1908, p. 94; African Times, July 5/99, p. 100; Standard, Apr. 26/99; Agbebi, An Account of Mojola Agbebi's Work in West Africa, Lagos, 1903.
77. Francis Cole to J.K. Coker, Nov. 30, 1903, Coker Papers.

and hostile denominations. It was a sorry spectacle for the idealists and spurred the efforts of those who felt that amalgamation was the only method by which the tarnished image of the movement could be restored.

At the close of 1907 the A.C. (Bethel) invited M.T. Euler-Ajayi, a U.N.A. clergyman, to deliver their anniversary lecture. He raised the issue again, no longer as amalgamation but as federal union.[78] Little but discussion followed.

It was obvious that much patient work was necessary to restore amity before any type of union was possible. The U.N.A. which had taken the lead in the past, did so again. Beginning in 1908 it turned its anniversaries into occasions in which all the clergy of the African churches were invited to take part. In 1910 all of the organizations participated. Heartened by this response the U.N.A. convened a meeting of the clergy and proposed an annual united week of prayer in conjunction with the Evangelical Alliance. The clergy were agreeable but upon return to their respective organizations discovered that the proposal was coldly received.[79]

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78. M.T. Euler-Ajayi "Annual Sermon 1907" Conference Proceedings 1901-1908, pp. 20-21: Winfunke, Causes of Indigenous Churches, p. 15.
79. U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 28/08, July 31/09 and Aug. 6/10, pp. 515, 527, 548. Evangelical Alliance Programmes for Universal Week of Prayer, 1909 and 1912, Report of a Meeting on the Week of Prayer sponsored by the Evangelical Alliance, Dec. 14, 1908, and Campbell to Jones and Euler-Ajayi, Dec. 18, 1908, W.A.E. Minute Book.

The clerical meeting resulted in the formation of a Free Churches Ministers Union. Its aim was to promote amity and interdenominational good will. It was ultimately successful in winning general support for the week of prayer and promoting united appeals for such bodies as the British and Foreign Bible Society.[80]

J.K. Coker was so impressed and inspired by the united week of prayer that he approached the Ministers Union with a proposal for the formation of an African Communion to perpetuate good will throughout the year. The union agreed to convene a meeting of clergy and representative laymen. The first meeting sat in August, 1912, and agreed upon the desirability of a Communion but divided over its aims and the basis of union.

At a second meeting it was agreed that organizations eligible should be those "of local origin and African management." A committee of seven was elected to draft a proposed basis of union and Agbebi was chosen to head the committee.[81] His Anglican and Baptist background was of immense importance for drafting an agreement which would be acceptable to such diverse organizations as Araromi and the

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80. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Jan. 31, 1910, ii, p. 69; Circular to the African churches, Mar. 7, 1910, Coker Papers.
81. U.N.A. Minutes, July 24, 1912, ii, p. 31; A.C. (Salem) Minutes, June 11, 1912, ii, 120; J.K. Coker to General Committee, A.C.(Salem), May 22, 1912, Coker Papers; Euler-Ajayi, General Report of the African Communion, 1913, Oke Papers.

A. C. (Bethel).

The basis of union was presented to the third meeting of the delegates on August 28, 1912. It consisted of ten statements, the first nine of which were traditional statements of orthodox protestantism. There was opposition to the word "communion." Some preferred African Church Alliance for the name of the organization and Lord's supper for the ordinance. The promoters opposed both as weakening the vital core of the venture-- inter-communion. Opposition arose to the doctrinal statement-- "justification of sinners by faith." One group proposed adding "and repentence."[82] Another felt literacy should be included, an example of missionary teaching as opposed to bibical example.

The basis of union ended with what became the most controversial of all-- statement ten. It was designed to cover the points of disagreement on dogma and organization (polygamy, the Christian ministry, and the balance between clerical and lay authority). It was paradoxical that statement ten fashioned with so much care to avoid friction was the cause of future ill-will and dispute.

> This basis does not involve an assumption to define the limits of Christian fellowship; and no compromise of the views of any member; or sanction of those of others on the points wherein they differ is required or expected; but all are held free as before to maintain and advocate their religious convictions with due forebearance and brotherly love without interferring with, or disturbing the order of polity of any African Church to which its membership belong.[83]

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82. Euler-Ajayi, General Report, Oke Papers; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Sept. 24, 1912, ii, p. 129.
83. Euler-Ajayi, General Report, Oke Papers.

The organization was to consist of a General Council composed of all the clergy and seven delegates from each member denomination. The executive was to be elected at triennial conferences. The influential positions, president, vice-president and secretary were to be held by the clergy, the subordinate posts by the laity. The lay controlled organizations objected to this clerical domination. Amendments added the "lay heads" to the executive. This in turn frightened clerical organizations. The A.C.(Salem) stressed that this post had created confusion in the past. While J.K. Coker was now being appointed, it was for communion purposes only. He held no duties or rights under Salem's constitution. The W.A.E. refused to appoint a lay head. It also refused to tolerate the clergy standing before a lay conference for election. When the proposal that clerical heads should take the presidency in rotation was turned down, the W.A.E. refused to sign the basis of union.[84]

Eight organizations participated in the preparatory meetings. Three accepted the basis of union and the African Communion was formed in 1913 with Mojola Agbebi its first president. Its success in promoting co-operation induced others to join in the following years-- A.C. (Bethel),

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84. G.A. Oke, Iwasu Isin Adupe ti African Communion Ti a se ni, Aug. 25, 1935, Oke Papers; Sixth Annual Conference, May , 1914, W.A.E. Minute Book.

A.C. (Penuel) and U.A.M. (Eleja). Active branches operated in Ibadan and Agege.[85] In 1921 the Communion was at the peak of its power and prestige, uniting six organizations which held the allegiance of ninety percent of the African churchmen of the Yoruba country.

The Communion developed admirable co-operation between its members. It arranged for comity and settled disputes on overlapping. The united anniversaries and week of prayer continued under its auspices. United revival conventions were an added event. The Communion clergy led the processions at prominent funerals.[86] They attended each other's ordinations and consecrations.

The U.N.A. took the lead in inviting the bishops of the member organizations to lay hands in the elevation of its superintendent. Upon the establishment of the U.A.M. (Eleja) in 1917 the Communion provided the ministerial functions for that church for three years. When the U.A.M. (Eleja) decided to create its own clergy in 1919, Communion bishops were invited to ordain. They continued to provide this service until 1938 when the U.A.M.(Eleja) asked the Communion to elevate a superintendent so that they might

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85. Scott to J.K. Coker, July 31, 1914; Agbebi to J.K. Coker, July 28, 1913; J.K. Coker, African Methodist Church, 1918, Coker Papers, U.N.A. Minutes, Sept. 28, 1912, p. 37.
86. The Communion held a memorial service for Bishop Johnson, the only mission person ever so honoured. See Communion circular, June 18, 1917, Coker Papers.

perpetuate their own ministry.[87]

The Ministers Union continued to function in co-ordination with the Communion and other subsidiary organizations were created-- a Womens Auxiliary, and a Choir Union. Joint financial projects were undertaken, such as collecting for Belgian war relief, a Communion Hymn Book, an Agriculture Institute, and a Theological College. The Communion sought to defend the name of the African churches, and sued the C.M.S. for a publication which described their doctrines as "pernicious."[88]

In 1917 the Communion organized a day of prayer for the success of imperial arms "to damp down unrest" and develop love between rulers and subjects. In 1920 another day of prayer sought blessing for the nationalists in the National Congress of British West Africa. The 1920 prayer topics included "that brotherhood and unity may be increasingly developed among Black men so that those close to the Governor may give just and sympathetic advice," and again, "that the spirit of hatred towards the Black man may die

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87. Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1904-24, pp. 14-15 and 47-48; U.N.A. Minutes, Apr. 3, 1914, p. 74; U.A.M.(Eleja) Preachers Book 1921-1930; U.A.M.(Eleja) Twenty Fifth Annual Report, 1942, typescript; U.A.M.(Eleja) Vestry; U.A.M.(Eleja) Anniversary Programme, n.d., Coker Papers.

88. G.A. Oke, Report of the Third Triennial Conference of the Communion 1919-1922, Oke Papers, U.N.A. Minutes, Aug. 23, 1918, pp. 209 and 217; A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Oct. 1/17, iv, p. 108; A.C. (Bethel) Minutes, Mar. 27, 1920, iii, p. 112.

out in the hearts of the White and the truth that both are the same, grow and develop."[89] Both were significant. The first reflected the general concern over the reliance of the governor upon the advice of a small coterie of Africans of the establishment. The second indicated uneasiness at the growing racial antipathy which followed World War 1.

The Communion's most important role was an unexpected one. It became a court of appeal for disputes between factions within the organizations. It was natural to expect that it would become an arbiter of inter-organizational disputes. But it was surprising that the organizations permitted the infringement of their sovereignty on matters of a strictly internal nature. Successful decisions were handed down on disputes in the U.N.A., in Bethlehem, and in Bethel churches.[90] In comparison with the civil courts used earlier, the Communion provided a dignified and economical solution to factional disturbances.

The Communion played a definite and positive role in promoting co-operation between the A.C. (Bethel) and A.C. (Salem) which led to their reunion in 1922. The

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89. J.K. Coker to Oke, Jan. 23, 1917; Additional Prayers for the Evangelical Alliance Prayer Week, 1920, Coker Papers.

90. U.N.A., Thirtieth Anniversary Report, p. 11, Oke, Report of the Third Triennial Conference 1919-1922, Oke, Iwasu Isin Idupe..., 1935, Oke Papers; Oke, History of the U.N.A. 1904-1924, p. 38; A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, July 12, July 19, Sept. 15 and Oct. 27, 1921, iii, pp. 172, 176, 191 and 200; Times of Nigeria, June 13, June 20, 1921.

A.C. (Salem) for a number of years professed eagerness to enter into reunion negotiations. The sincerity of its motives were never tested because the A.C. (Bethel) refused to negotiate. The change of heart of the A.C.(Bethel) in 1921 came as a culmination to multiple problems which beset that organization after 1914.

The power structure within the A.C. (Bethel) was familiar. A.W. Thomas (like J.W. Cole and later G.A. Williams of the U.N.A.) was chief elder supported by junior leaders-- the key figures in his vast pyramid of followers. Policy could not be initiated, far less put into practice without his consent and active approval. Thomas was more powerful in 1914 than when he challenged Coker in the popular election of 1905. He continued to show a unique ability to espouse popular causes and combine them with the influence of his wealth to wield his pyramid into a formidable force within the A.C. (Bethel).

Thomas emerged the undisputed elder of the A.C. (Bethel) after the crisis of 1905-07. During the following seven years a possible challenge and alternative to his leadership developed around independent junior leaders-- the Adeshigbin brothers and the Agege planters, C.C. Cole and Fred Williams.

Dada Adeshigbin (1865-1925) was a commercial agent in Lagos, the sole representative for thirty years of the Singer Sewing Machine Company in Nigeria. He was an active

patron of the interior churches. He was a modest man, devoted to reform within the church by constitutional means. His son qualified as a medical doctor and his daughter married another prominent African churchman and merchant, Disu Ige, a Moslem convert to Christianity. His younger brother, Akin, established Tika Tore Press in 1910, which became an important publisher of nationalist writings. In the early twenties it published the Yoruba weeklies, Eleti Ofe and Eko Akete. In the thirties, Tika Tore published the African Church Chronicle which Oke Adeshigbin, another brother, edited.[91]

C.C. Cole (1868-1923) and Fred Williams (1867-1918) were planters at Agege, the chief elders of the plantation church, St. Andrews Iju. Cole was also proprietor of Karaole printing press begun in 1898 in Lagos. His son Aboyade-Cole entered the ministry and in 1962 was elected primate of the African Church Organization. Both Cole and Williams were personal friends of J.K. Coker, chief elder of the A.C. (Salem). They owned adjoining plantations. Their co-operative efforts in the Agege Planters Union brought them into daily contact.[92] Plans for reunion matured on the plantations of Agege.

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91. African Church Chronicle, April-June, 1936; African Messenger, Oct. 18, 1923; Memorial Plaque, Bethel Cathedral; Ikoyi Burial Grounds.
92. Interview, Rt. Rev. A. Aboyade-Cole, Feb. 27, 1962; A.P.U. Minutes, July 27, 1912, Coker Papers, Isaac O. Williams, Jan. 15, 1962. (Interview)

Three issues aroused controversy in the A.C.(Bethel) between 1914 and 1921. They were the demand for revision of the constitution to give more clerical authority, reunion with the A.C. (Salem) and a dispute over whether the new Bethel Church was to be built as a storey or ground structure.

The revision of the constitution towards a clerically controlled organization was supported by those disturbed by the stagnation of the church as compared with the dynamism of the A.C. (Salem). The General Committee was financially too weak to initiate, far less carry out policy. In contrast, the individual churches were strong. They paid the best clerical stipends in the African Church Movement. Yet this was insufficient to draw candidates to the ministry. Rebel C.M.S. clergy preferred the lower salaries of the A.C. (Salem) where they wielded influence in policy making.[93]

The clergy complained of the low ebb of spirituality among the laity. The result was immorality, self-assertion, and continual strife. They maintained that this corruption was the result of a constitution which controlled its clergy, but not its laity. The clergy realized that they either moved in concert or not at all. In the General Committee they argued in favour of constitutional revision, but when a vote was called, they voted against it, wisely realizing

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93. See table V1, Part iii. p. 222.

that the laity and especially Thomas held power over them.[94]

Some of the laity led by A.A. Obadina, favoured the clerical argument, pointing out the evils of an excess of local autonomy and the narrow limits to General Committee power. It could not ordain, transfer or dismiss clergy except upon the recommendation of parish committees. In one instance two priests were charged with disobeying the General Committee. The clergy boycotted this meeting in protest against condemning ministers who obeyed their parish committees as was their duty under the constitution. Sufficient laity agreed with them and the charges were dropped.

The General Committee could not even compel a minister to appear before them. When Ijebu Ode District Council forbade its ministers to appear before the General Committee, many of the elders in helplessness talked of halting the trend of decentralization.[95]

T.B. Dawodu, president of Bethlehem and Thomas, president of Bethel, supported by the interior churches, especially Ijebu Ode, opposed meddling with the constitution. They blamed clerical control for the schism from Breadfruit in 1901 and the crisis of 1905-07. It was an emotionally charged issue.[96] The interior, as always, associated clerical

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94. A.C. (Bethel) Minutes, Mar. 7/17, Sept. 27/19, Dec.18/19 and Dec. 16/20, iii, pp. 1, 94, 108, and 147.
95. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Mar. 7/17, Apr. 28/17, Mar. 27/20, iii, pp. 1, 8, and 147.
96. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 7/17, iii, p. 50.

control with Lagos domination.

For the clergy, reunion with the A.C. (Salem) would achieve the same end. That organization was unlikely to submit to a reunion constitution which denied clerical authority. Since only one of the twelve ministers had experienced either the schism of 1901 or the crisis of 1905-07, they had no personal bitterness arising out of the past. Reunion was a popular proposal especially for the younger laity, even those within Thomas' pyramid. They talked of its inevitability, of the two visible branches of the one spiritual African Church, and the scar which division continued to implant upon the image of the church. They hoped reunion would provide an institution of secondary education and theological training from which some, no doubt, hoped to benefit personally. The youths admired Coker, and the militancy of the A.C. (Salem). Coker wooed them sedulously with popular gestures-- a generous donation to a worthy cause, an invitation to a lavish festival on his plantation.

The Agege planters, A.A. Obadina, C.C. Cole, and Fred Williams were party to the conspiracy to undermine Thomist strength. On December 11, 1916, as a gesture of gratitude for his fiftieth birthday, Fred Williams issued an appeal to both organizations to appoint seven delegates each, to sit as a committee of reunion. In sub-sections of the appeal, Williams provided for an endowment of £500

and fifty acres of land to be invested for the joint use of the African churches (Bethel and Salem) and the U.N.A..[97] Williams died before the advantageous mo_ment could be utilized by the union party. But the appeal stood as a rallying point. When the union was ultimately consumated, tradition gave the major share of the credit to Fred Williams.

The third problem was the new Bethel building. The majority of the congregation voted for a tall, storey building. The minority, which included the elders, wanted a modest one storey ediface. Since the elders would shoulder the costs they expected their wishes to prevail. Normally they would have. But A.W. Thomas reversed himself and joined the "poor majority." He determined to erect the tallest building in Lagos which would look down upon the mission churches-- especially Christ Church. Thomas declared he would build a church worthy of his name to demonstrate his zeal and love for the work of God, the African Church, and the race.

The congregation subscribed £200. Thomas loaned £800 and construction began. Dada Adeshigbin led the "wealthy minority" who questioned the elaborate structure and doubted whether the congregation could afford its future upkeep. He foresaw that the total cost would run to £10,000, no more than ten percent of which could be expected from

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97. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 12/16, iii, pp. 75-80.

the congregation.[98]

No one doubted that Thomas could build the church without the assistance of the elders. But they feared and rightly that this was designed to strengthen Thomas' control which was being threatened by the clergy, by demands for constitutional revision, and by the Williams' appeal for reunion.

It was customary for elders to use the device of a loan to maintain their control. J.W. Cole for example, "gave" the U.N.A. their first building in 1891, but the title deeds were in his name and possession. Before his death he turned them over to G.A. Williams who succeeded him as chief elder. If there was no threat to Thomas' position within the organization, the loan would never be collected. If, on the other hand, he was challenged he could (in an extreme case), sue the church and seize the building.

Thomas' position appeared secure. He demonstrated repeatedly that he had popular support. Ebute Metta and the interior defended the constitution and Bethel supported the storey building. Reunion was popular everywhere but impractical as long as the constitution remained unrevised

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98. "Quiet Worshipper", African Messenger, July 7, 1921; A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 16, 1920, iii, p. 147; Brief of the Minority Party to the African Communion, Dec. 19, 1916 and Fred Williams to Congregational Meeting, July 6, 1914, (Document A), Communion File, Oke Papers.

and the Bethel building incomplete. Most wanted the storey building and reunion too. Thomas made this impossible. In 1917 he held a mortgage on Bethel for £2,000. If his opposition ever combined to revise the constitution and push reunion, he could threaten to foreclose.

Thomas, like a clever diplomat, never openly expressed his hostility to the measures he opposed. As president of the General and parish committees, he used all the prerogatives of his office to his advantage-- postponing the vote, suspending discussion, pleading no quorum and crossing out unsatisfactory resolutions from the minutes.[99] The wealthy minority fought back by refusing to contribute to the building funds. A number of times transaction of business was halted in deadlock. Thomas usually resigned. The result was his massive re-election by the congregation. The vestry finally passed a resolution that he should hold office without re-election until the building had been completed.[100]

When Fred Williams issued his appeal in 1916, Thomas insisted that it should take precedent over constitutional revision. He argued that since the reunited organization would have to fashion a new constitution, to revise the present one was unnecessary duplication. Thus he sought

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99. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Nov. 22/18, Mar. 27/20 and June 26/20, iii, pp. 65, 112, and 116.
100. Pope, "The African Bethel Church in Travail", African Messenger, June 30, 1921.

to ride the popular issue of reunion-- at least not to appear as opposing it.

A committee of reunion was elected by the General Committee. Thomas' nominee, T.B. Dawodu, a strong opponent of both revision and reunion, was selected to head it. Dawodu stalled the work of the reunion committee for two and a half years, once declaring the appointments irregular, then calling for new appointees, and finally complaining of the inadequate representation of the interior churches. When requested to report the committee's progress he pleaded illness and failed to attend the General Committee.[101]

The opposition united after the partly completed structure of the church collapsed in 1917. The wealthy minority withheld their contributions and boycotted the Sunday services. The clergy, aware of the futility of individual opposition, joined their superintendent in refusing to attend the General Committee until revision of the constitution was begun. United action brought them one minor gain. For the first time (in 1918) the A.C. (Salem) was invited to participate in their anniversary celebrations. This was sometime after the A.C. (Salem) had extended a similar invitation. For years now, both clergy had been mingling in U.N.A. services.[102]

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101. A.C. (Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 7/17, Mar. 28/18, Dec. 12/18 and Mar. 27/20, iii, pp. 55, 50, 75 and 112; Dawodu to J.K. Coker, May 22, 1918, Coker Papers.
102. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 16/20, iii, p. 147; A.C. (Salem) Minutes, Nov. 10/13, ii, p. 158; J.K. Coker to Thomas, Nov. 12, 1913, Akiola to J.K. Coker, n.d., 1917? Coker Papers.

To restore peace, the African Communion was asked to arbitrate. The collapse of the building had been a heavy blow to Thomas. His £2,000 had accomplished nothing. During the arbitration he offered to reduce the loan by £500 and make another loan to begin rebuilding if the elders would recommence their subscriptions. The Communion supervised the vestry meeting where Thomas once again received overwhelming support. His gift of £500 and his offer of a further loan were accepted.[103]

The arbitration failed. The wealthy minority had sought a written agreement from Thomas stating the terms of repayment. Thomas promised that it need not begin until after the building was completed. There would be no interest charge. The annual payments would not be oppressive. The elders pressed for a legal agreement. The vestry rejected this demand as demeaning to Thomas' public word.

The wealthy minority resumed attendance. Quietly they began contributing to a private fund in the hands of Dada Adeshigbin. He offered to contribute £100 to the Bethel building fund everytime that Thomas reduced his loan by £200.[104] Thomas ignored the offer.

Many had become aware of the political game which Thomas was playing even before the economic crisis of 1921. By the time Thomas began to feel financial embarrassment,

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103. Minutes of [Arbitration Board] Meeting with A.C.(Bethel) delegates, Oct. 29, 1917 and Nov. 2, 1917, Coker Papers.
104. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 16/20, iii, p. 147.

T.B. Dawodu, the strongest and most influential leader in the pyramid had died. When the Adeshigbins again brought the General Committee to deadlock, Thomas made the tactical mistake of resigning (as was his habit) to gain vestry support. He failed to get it. His pyramid had crumbled with his affluence. Presumably Adeshigbin offered the substantial sums in the private fund to the congregation in exchange for its acquiesence in Thomas' resignation. Adeshigbin was the only one capable of getting construction moving again. Without serious vestry objection the General Committee dismissed Thomas and two of his supporters from membership. Thomas immediately sued Adeshigbin and others in the civil courts for £1,500.[105]

Upon the dismissal of Thomas in July, 1921, the General Committee immediately ordered the revision committee to rush its proceedings. The revised constitution was sent out to all churches in September. Bethlehem Church of Ebute Metta objected and dismissed its ministers who openly supported it. It was passed by the General Committee on December 2, 1921, over the unanimous protest of the Bethlehem delegates.[106]

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105. Thomas won the case in the courts which set out the method of repayment. Thomas then forgave the debt turning it into a gift or donation. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, July 12, and Sept. 15, 1921, iii, pp. 172 and 191; The letters of dismissal were published see African Messenger, Aug. 11, 1921; A.W. Thomas vs. Akinoso and Adeshigbin, in the Supreme Court of Nigeria, Dec. 23, 1921, Coker Papers; Lagos Weekly Record, Jan. 1, 1921.

106. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, July 12, Sept. 15, Oct. 27 and Dec. 2, 1921, iii, pp. 172, 191, 200 and 211; Times of Nigeria, June 20, 1921.

The revised constitution which embodied the principle of clerical control from the parish to the organization level, was brought before the Annual Conference, December 13, 1921. Superintendent J.S. Williams was for the first time invited to take the chair. The opponents held up the ratification vote for three hours by numerous questions, cat-calls, and rowdiness. A.A. Obadina who shepherded the vote, kept his temper, answered questions and proved the constitutional nature of every step taken. He finally carried the ratification on a vote of thirty to sixteen.[107]

It was an historic occasion, one of those rare times when policy was initiated on a majority vote. But it was a dangerous occasion. The ratification vote was a clear cut triumph for Lagos at the expense of the interior-- Lagos domination in its most naked form. That Lagos could dominate a conference against the wishes of Ebute Metta and the interior on a vote of thirty to sixteen indicated the bias in the representative system. Seventy percent of the membership controlled one third of the representatives.

Immediately after the vote the Bethlehem and Ijebu delegates walked out. Bethlehem school was locked against the conference. In the months ahead Bethlehem, Ijebu, and surprisingly enough Agege, sent no representatives to the General Committee. All of the interior churdhes withheld

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107. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Dec. 13-15, 1921, iii, pp. 215-19.

their assessment rates.[108]

Once the conference had ended the reunion committee began regular sittings. On November 24, 1922, it declared its intention to re-unite the two organizations. In December an amalgamated conference of the A.C. (Bethel) and the A.C. (Salem) was held where reunion was ratified by a unanimous vote. The conference elected a committee to draw a constitution for the reunited organization. Before the committee had even begun its sittings the reunited General Committee sat for the first time on March 18, 1923.[109]

What caused such remarkable speed? The dismissal of Thomas and death of Dawodu disorganized the opposition. J.K. Coker had gained immense prestige by his offer (not accepted) to repay Thomas his loan.[110] The clergy favoured reunion. They controlled both organizations. Once the hierarchical ladder was adjusted to the satisfaction of all, few other obstacles remained. The dangerous defection in the interior was demanding immediate attention. Possibly a reunited church could win back its allegiance.

A last minute hesitation arose in the A.C. (Salem). As

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108. A.C.(Bethel) Minutes, Feb. 21 and June 20, 1922, iii, pp. 288 and 234.
109. Declaration of Union, Nov. 24, 1922; United General Committee Minutes, Mar. 18, 1923, Coker Papers; "Programme of the Conference of the Amalagamated Organization", Dec. 10-18, African Messenger, Dec. 7, 1922; Revised Constitution of the African Church, Lagos, 1951, preamble.
110. John to J.K. Coker, Aug. 3, 1917; Akiola to J.K.Coker, July 15, 1918, Coker Papers.

late as February 1923 (the United General Committee sat in March) that organization was talking of the reunion being perfected in four years.[111] After all the union would swamp Evangelical principles and their defender-- J.K. Coker. But the economic crisis of 1921 was embarrassing Coker as well as Thomas.

The A.C.(Salem) was on the verge of financial collapse. The ministers had not been paid. Some threatened to resign, others asked for an honourable release to take up work elsewhere. Coker and the other Agege planters were broken. Coker proposed calling upon the A.C. (Bethel) for assistance. Thus the reunited General Committee met for the first time.[112] The arrangement became permanent.

The new constitution[113] created a primate (a symbol of clerical authority) and three bishops with territorial jurisdiction. The same two streams of authority were developed as in the U.N.A. except that the clergy presided over all committees. While the lay stream was subordinate to the General Conference, the clerical was not. District Councils, a compromise form of local autonomy, were given

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111. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Feb. 12, 1923, Rough notes, Coker Papers.
112. A.C.(Salem) Minutes, Feb. 12, 1923, Rough notes; J.K. Coker to Fisher, June 21, 1922, Opebi to Adefolu, Jan. 30, 1923, Coker Papers.
113. Revised Constitution of the African Church, 1925; J.K. Coker, History of the African Church, 1941; J.K. Coker, Memorandum, 1935?, Coker Papers.

enhanced powers including responsibility for clerical stipends. The new constitution did not operate perfectly, but no major division took place which suggested that a workable balance had been found.

The A.C. (Bethel) was a classic example of the theory outlined at the beginning of part iv of the interaction among the four major factions in an African Church governing authority. A.W. Thomas was the prototype of the powerful chief elder opposed by junior leaders devoted to constitutional action to isolate him. The clergy acted as a unit and attempted to remain detached from the struggle among the laity. The vestry, while urging compromise, was unwilling to upset the delicate balance in the leadership by unseating either of the factions.

Thomas combined the attributes of eldership of J.W. Cole and G.A. Williams of the U.N.A.. Like Cole, his vestry support depended upon his pyramid of supporters and the popularity of the storey ediface he was prepared to provide. Like Williams, he possessed superb skill in manipulating the procedures of the General Committee. By the device of having his priorities accepted, he made the popular issue of reunion dependent upon the unpalatable revision of the constitution and a one storey ediface. The appointment of Dawodu, an avowed opponent of revision, to head the reunion committee, assured that it would never reach the stage of committee debate.

Dada Adeshigbin led the co-operative circle of independents, which sought by constitutional means for seven years to break the elder's power. On occasion he succeeded in isolating him in the General Committee but each time Thomas returned with a fresh mandate from the vestry. Passive membership and withheld subscriptions brought Thomas to arbitration but it was the special fund during Thomas' economic embarrassment in 1921 which ultimately was effective. The device of a special fund had first been used by G.A. Williams to undermine Elder Cole in 1895 in the U.N.A..

The clergy remained detached from the quarrel among the elders. Particularly after they had achieved unity among themselves they openly supported Adeshigbin's faction. In crucial decisions, however, they voted with Thomas. An oligarchy succeeded Thomas in 1921, as it had Cole in 1897 and G.A. Williams in 1919. The usual rush of changes took place. As in the U.N.A. the clergy seized the opportunity to enhance their influence and power.

The vestry repeatedly urged its leaders to compromise. Its support for Thomas had been emphasized. It was also noteworthy, that the vestry re-elected his opposition each year. It refused to impose a settlement by unseating either Thomas or Adeshigbin.

The operation of the governing authority was seen at its best in the A.C. (Bethel) between 1914 and 1921. During a compact period of seven years one crucial episode

began and ended. The participants remained throughout, with no major change in their economic and social circumstances. The four power groups-- elders, junior leaders, clergy and vestry-- acted within constitutional limits. With the major outside influences stable, the governmental structure operated with unusual simplicity and clarity. It was the ideal example of African Church government procedure in the early twentieth century.

Decentralization reached the last stage before secession, if indeed the revolt of the interior in 1921 was not secession. The doctrine of local autonomy so effectively used by Thomas against Coker in 1907, was turned against him by Ijebu Ode a decade later. By 1918 even Thomas would have welcomed a "tightening up" of the A.C. (Bethel) had it been consistent with lay authority. The reunited church of 1922 realistically tackled the problem of the interior. The union constitution made strenuous efforts to broaden the organization from its narrow base in Lagos to the whole of Yorubaland. With greater attention to representation according to membership, District Councils with firm rights and responsibilities and the appointment of resident interior bishops, the African Church could rightly feel that organizationally it had matured.

In surveying the African Church Movement as a whole between 1913 and 1922, three major events achieve prominence-- the creation of the Communion, the reunion of the African Church Organization and the U.N.A. ruling on polygamy.

The Communion had been the product of Evangelical agitation. It was the most imaginative and inspiring development after the schisms which began the African Church Movement. Evangelical influence was smothered in the reunion of 1922 and support for the Communion in the African Church Organization withered away. The U.N.A. was not blameless. After years of patient effort to establish the Communion it destroyed its creation with a hard and inflexible policy on polygamy.

Following the U.N.A. decision to accept a polygamous clergy, the African Church, U.A.M. (Eleja) and Araromi Baptists withdrew from the Communion. Had Agbebi lived he might have averted this crisis. No leader of his stature succeeded him. G.A. Oke of the U.N.A., the obvious choice, was admired personally, but the majority would not tolerate the policy of the organization he led.

By 1925 the Communion had been abandoned. It was revived in less effective forms on a couple of occasions and still is in existence. Since 1925 it has never won wholehearted support and its influence has been negligible and sporadic. Higher education and theological training have suffered as a consequence.

The educated elite of modern Nigeria, whether Christian, Muslim or pagan judge church organizations by the amount and quality of the education they have provided in the past. On this criterion, the elite has pronounced the African Church Movement a failure. For this reason, missions employ the majority of their foreign staff in educational work. Favours which the elite will be prepared to sanction in the future will be bestowed on churches in recognition of their educational efforts. The African churches will not qualify.

In the past the African churches fell heir to leaders of quality because of the limited opportunities in civil life, and the reticence of the missions to tolerate a challenge to European authority. But what of the future? The result may be a sharp deterioration in the quality of African Church leadership.

A revived African Communion could promote education and provide the basis for future organic union. African Church union is more urgent than ever before, since the missions are negotiating their own union scheme. Regardless of mission policy, churchmen cannot be satisfied until the plans first formulated in 1891 by Johnson and Blyden are consumated in a National Church. It is within the realm of the possible, for the African churches to create the largest single Christian organization in Nigeria. When the African churches become the African Church, the reformation of 1888-1922 will command the

attention denied it in the past and churchmen will have fully justified the faith of the founding fathers in African leadership.

EPILOGUE

Political independence forced the missions to carry out a policy they had shunned since 1894 -- promotion of African leadership. African leadership provides a bulwark against nationalism. It is a shield behind which the missionaries attempt to direct (the modern word is "guide") as before.

Prior to independence the missions rushed through a hasty and improvised Africanization policy promoting leaders with great rapidity. National independence frightened many who became apprehensive about the future missionary role. They recalled the fate of missionaries in China. But when the independence celebrations subsided and little appeared to have changed, some began to settle back and calculate more carefully just how much had to be given away. Some even felt that in ill-advised haste too much had been sacrificed.

Times change but attitudes die slowly. Ideas prevalent in the eighteen nineties are still flourishing in missionary circles in Western Nigeria. Today it is the Americans who must look after and administer American money -- almost to phraseology the argument used by the English in 1890 on the Niger. Residences originally provided for missionary supervisors must not be considered the home of Africans who succeed them-- a policy first formulated by the C.M.S.

in 1902. A lowered standard of morality (a reference to monogamous hypocrisy) discussed as if it arose during the past decade of African leadership, is the favourite criticism. Similar attitudes underlay Brooke's charge of moral lapses among Niger Christians in the 1880's, and Newton's purge of the Baptists in 1889. For the same reason Tugwell accused the Breadfruit secessionists of 1901 of unwillingness to conform to standards of Biblical morality. It was the basis of Griffin's expulsion of the prominent Methodists of Ereko Church in 1917.

Mission ideas remain static because criticism is discouraged from those most capable of it -- the missionaries. It may be naive to expect the church to be more introspective about her policies than the merchant or politician. Few expect the church to remain totally concerned with absolute truth and purity of motive. Yet it would seem that the church itself would wish to be judged on a different level than the Liverpool merchants, for example. Mission history, however, becomes intelligible only if the standards applied to secular institutions are applied to it.

The mission societies of Western Nigeria produced few introspective thinkers -- only master propagandists. The propaganda was designed to encourage their supporters in England and America to be generous. But it gained over the years the sanctity of truth for the missionaries themselves. Possibly it was to be expected that a great missionary age

such as 1890 to 1920 would produce a generation so positive it was right that introspection and questioning were close to heresy. The church faces today many of the problems it faced in 1891 with no more discussion or criticism to assist in their solution than existed seventy years ago.

Church union is the modern panacea for the ills of the missions. If it is approached with the blinkered policies and narrow attitudes of the past it will be far less effective than its eager advocates proclaim. In Western Nigeria those eligible for union include the three mission churches--Anglican, Methodist, Baptist, and the four African churches: U.N.A., W.A.E., U.A.M.(Eleja), and African Church Organization.

Among the missions the Baptists are the least likely to co-operate. American involvement in personnel, policy and finance is much greater among Baptists than English influence among Anglicans and Methodists. Besides the division in theology and ritual (important factors in themselves) there is the national antipathy between Americans and English. That American Baptist finance would predominate in a union church basically Anglican, is difficult to imagine. There have been signs of African Baptist sympathy for church union but missionary influence and finance will prevent incipient revolt developing into general rebellion. Thus in Western Nigeria, church union will bring together Anglicans and Methodists whose comity and co-operative educational institutions date a long way into the past. They have

discussed union before and except for the hostility of their parent denominations would probably have achieved it.

Church union caught the African churches unaware . Some instinctively turned to revitalize the African Communion as a gesture of opposition, others sought to join the Christian Council to test missionary sincerity. A missionary dominated Council rejected the application. In contrast and more hopefully for the future, African Anglican bishops have initiated united prayer with the African churches-- a distinct and sharp break with their long tradition of hostility. Until this confusion in mission policy is clarified the African churches have a duty to rebuild their own broken unity.

Future negotiations with the missions should be conducted from a position of strength. The African Communion appears the best organ for that purpose with the African Church Organization taking a leading position within it. The Communion should decide the cardinal principles of the African Church Movement making them the minimum concessions it would find necessary to extract from the United Church as the price of joining. This exercise in co-operation might lead to organic union of the African churches themselves, an objective which may become more urgent if the missions successfully launch an exclusive union.

The African churches can scarcely be expected to go back on at least two of the fundamental principles of their

origin and history-- African leadership and an honest policy on polygamy. African leadership of a kind has emerged within the mission churches but is this leadership its own master? The composition and attitude of the Christian Council makes it appear doubtful. How much is missionary influence still the major factor in policy making?

Church Union is applauded by many as a noble ideal. But there are elements who support it from less altruistic motives. To them it is a preparation for the defence of Christian rights and privileges against an indifferent or slightly hostile nationalist government. Many missionaries believe that this type of ecclesiastical versus civil dispute is inevitable. If Christians are forced to face such a struggle they would undoubtedly gain strength from their unity. But if, as some Africans suspect, Church Union is a tool for strengthening the missionaries' hands, a facade behind which they can continue to be the power behind the bishop's throne the African churches should positively seek to stand apart. Their influence would be stronger if the politicians were convinced that the views African churchmen expressed were their own and not dictated by the size of foreign grants, the desire for missionary goodwill or the recognition of an overseas denomination.

It may sound cynical and even abhorent to the African Christian idealist but those denominations which have gained fullest support are those which have closely identified

themselves with the national aspirations and prejudices of their people. The church in modern times in many areas accepts if not openly applauds social conditions which appal members of that very denomination elsewhere in the world. The Southern United States and South Africa are examples which touch acutely upon African consciousness. The church has not been noted for its crusading efforts. The successful are institutions of the establishment. The missionaries found little difficulty in supporting the earlier imperial regime. They defended themselves by quoting "render unto Caesar", by pleading helplessness, and by claiming they sacrificed material objectives for higher religious aims. All of which was the truth and excellent pointers for the future relationship between the church and modern nationalist governments.

The church in Africa must give unstinted loyalty to the nationalists even if this should mean a bending of principle. The most firmly held principle of African Christians is the brotherhood of African and European. The nationalist may demand that the principle of brotherhood be applied more among Africans of various ethnic groups and less between African and European. At this point the missionaries may be tempted to instigate their proteges to protest. In such circumstances it would be wisest if the African church voice was purely African and not suspect and that it was sympathetic to national aims. Everywhere the church has fostered the unity of the ethnic group first, the nation second and the

brotherhood of man a trailing last. If missionary hands are still in position to force the church into a hostile pose to such national policies, then African leadership as it is conceived by the African churches has not yet emerged.

The second concession the United Church must grant is an honest and tolerant policy toward polygamy. Again the attitude of the missions is confused. The Christian Council makes monogamy a condition of membership. Yet some leaders of denominations which are members of the Council have instructed that condidates for church membership be not questioned on their marriage arrangements. One African Anglican bishop will admit privately that the dogmatic position of the denomination does not appear to affect the marriage arrangements of the congregation. He is unwilling to say that his own congregation has a higher percentage of momogamous marriages than the African Church a few blocks away. In contrast certain African churches such as the U.N.A. are as unrealistic as the missions. Their defence of polygamy has not prevented a larger and larger percentage of their membership turning to monogamy. In educated Christian society of all denominations, monogamy is associated with the progressive. It seems peculiar that the influential laity of the U.N.A. (the majority being monogamous) should continue to tolerate polygamy among the clergy. If an honest, sensible

and flexible policy on polygamy was the one solid achievement of Church Union, the African churches might well feel that their membership was justified and that they had made an important contribution to Christianity in Nigeria.

The obstacles to union of mission and African churches are formidable. It may be impractical for some decades. If so, the task before the African churches is to keep their movement in the forefront of creative efforts within African Christendom. The alternative is stagnation. The problems of the African churches are the same ones which face the missions. The Christian frontiers are slowing down and in places have stopped moving. The Aladuras are the main group still making inroads into paganism. A related problem is the growing indifference of nominally Christian youth who are taking their religious responsibilities less seriously than their parents' generation did.

In Europe and America the church has so woven itself into society that even those who never attend its services are constantly being affected by its presence. The church does this in numerous ways -- through the patronage of the arts and music, social and welfare activities and participation in national and patriotic occasions. It is this pervasiveness of the church in the life of the nation which has given rise to the fallacy that Europe and America are Christian societies. Christian doctrine, dogma and moral standards do not interest the majority of Europeans or Americans. Doctrine, they do not comprehend; dogmatic differences, they label petty;

religious rules of morality seldom correspond to their social conditions or conscience.

Prior to 1920 the African churches held the prominence which arose from their position as the alternative to the missions. In the last couple of decades they have lost this prominence. Today, they are being squeezed from the public eye by the missions on one hand and the Aladuras on the other. To the average mission adherent, African Church is synonymous with Aladura. To the pagans and Muslims, they are proteges of a foreign society. The missions form their public image by elaborate sign posting, bookshops, schools, radio advertizing and the press. The Aladura achieve similar ends by distintive robes, outdoor services, colourful ceremony and rhythmic music.

The African churches attempt a little of each. The result is a blurred image. Their radio services are indistinguishable from the Anglicans. Their schools are signposted but rather less impressively so than the missions. Their clerical robes are distinctive in colour but their European design mark their mission origin. They employ rhythm and colourful ceremonies, but unlike Aladura, hide them from public view within the church walls.

For excellent reasons life in Western Nigeria centres around the street rather than the hearth. The African churches should seek the people where they are-- in the

open air. Muslims pray in the open. Aladuras dance and sing in the open. Christ himself, proclaimed his message out-of-doors.

In Western Nigeria the church's influence stops at its outer walls. It is possible to live within sight of a church building and never be conscious of it existence, never be a spectator far less a participant in its activities. Christmas and Easter and the other holy days of Christians pass unmarked for the general citizenry. In contrast, one cannot escape being aware of the Muslim "Ramadam" and pagan "Egungun". It is to this problem which the African churches need direct their attention.

Christianity must reach the people in the open, otherwise it may not reach them at all. The African churches are suited to initiate this development. The opportunity exists at festivals-- domestic, Christian and national. They provide appropriate occasions to fulfill what ought to be the basic aims of the future; to utilize the street, to combine the traditional with Christianity, and to project a unique image. Yoruba domestic rites (naming ceremonies and blessing new residences) offer opportunities for a beginning where precedent has already been set.

At present the Christian festivals, particularly Christmas and Easter, resemble Puritan or Hebrew sabbaths. The effort to create a family festival at Christmas as in colder climates, is bound to fail. The present dull

Christmas services are an insult to the joyous spirit which ought to surround the anniversary of Christ's birth. In Western Nigeria the climate demands torch parades, pageants and charades, dancing and singing in the streets and village squares.

Easter dawn services might easily borrow from American tradition and the Muslim Ramadam. Following an all night vigil of prayer (including Communion) at the individual churches, a dawn parade of the Christian population to an open-air service of praise is most inspiring to the participants and impressive to the spectators. Such a gathering offers an opportunity to weaken the barriers between sects. It should seek to reach all who consider themselves Christian. It should attempt to bring together the two extremes of Yoruba Christendom -- the missions and Aladura.

The process, of combining old and new and distinguishing the African image, can move in numerous directions. Yoruba colour symbols in pennants and flags, clerical vestments and choir robes should not be based on medieval Europe as in the missions, nor upon the Hebrews as in the Aladura, but upon national dress -- the Agbada. African Church buildings should distinguish themselves. They should incorporate the Yoruba carver's art, and be designed with wide aisles and commodious naves to accomodate the dancing sections of the litany.

The litany could well be improved by adjustment. At the present time it breaks abruptly between the Anglican and African halves. Is it not possible to integrate the two, giving the whole a unity and African feeling? This would require alternation of European and African hymnology and distribution of the dancing sections.

The African Church of the future may be noted for its emphasis upon prayer. Outlets for frequent communal prayer upon a variety of subjects is a distinguishing mark of many flourishing Christian groups in Nigeria. In no sense is this more applicable than in healing. The African churches might do well to define their doctrine on Christian healing considering the faith which many Yoruba have in its efficacy.

Should the African churches inaugurate their long delayed programme of fitting the church to Africa with vitality and enthusiasm, and utilizing the talent in their midst, they would not have to join the missions in apprehension for the future. Christianity has not stopped moving in Western Nigeria. It is simply moving through the inspiration of other minds and under the guidance of other hands.

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less value in judging the progress of the church.

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